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# Public education in Richmond : a look at current and historical data with student perspectives

Ben Wallerstein

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**Public Education in Richmond: A Look at Current  
and Historical Data With Student Perspectives**

**By**

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**Richmond, Virginia**

**May, 1999**

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*...the test of a first-rate intelligence is the ability to hold two opposed ideas in the mind at the same time, and still retain the ability to function. One should, for example be able to see that things are hopeless and yet be determined to make them otherwise.*

– F. Scott Fitzgerald

*...to change the world I will plot and scheme...*

– The Beastie Boys

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## **Introduction**

### *The Problem*

The United States currently exhibits a wider gap between rich and poor than it has since World War II. Studies have shown that a person's education is an effective indicator of his or her earnings. In America, on average, the longer a person stays in school, the more money they will make in their lifetime (Reich, 1989). Numerous studies have also shown that the leading influence on a child's decision/ability to further his/her education is the education of his/her parents ---not the student's school or school system. Poor, less educated American parents do not (or can not) encourage or support their children's education in the same ways that more affluent, educated American parents can. An ideal public education system would provide opportunities for all students despite family or community influences.

America's public schools reflect the nation's massive disparities of wealth. Despite federal, state, and local initiatives to more equitably distribute funding and other resources, ghetto education remains a seemingly permanent American reality. Public schools do not, often, provide countervailing definitions of reality and morality, allowing students to transcend the restraints of their communities and families, but rather reflect and magnify the impacts of deficiencies in these areas. The proliferation of a dual society, at least in public education, seems in general to be unquestioned (Kozol, 1991).

In addition to disparities, the caliber of public education in America is currently being questioned. As the U.S. merges with a global economy, the jobs that are created will fall into one of three categories: 1). symbolic analysts, 2). routine production services, and 3). routine personal services. Only jobs in symbolic analysis are increasing (Reich, 1989). In order to obtain positions and achieve in symbolic

analysis, employees will have to be technologically literate. The status quo, or minimum educational requirements of 21st century students must be raised as jobs in routine personal and production services decrease. There are five literacies necessary today: reading, writing, math, science, and computers (Logan, 1994). How well are America's schools doing to ensure that all students can attain these skills? Over 200,000 technology related jobs paying up to thirty-five thousand dollars per year remain vacant in the United States (Inge, 1998). Who will fill these positions in the future? The proliferation of an effective and equitable public education system is an essential element of maintaining America's ideology ---life liberty and the pursuit of happiness--- as well as assuring our nation's economic and political vitality as we move into the twenty-first century.

### *Virginia's Standards of Learning*

In order to ensure that high academic standards are met and students are prepared to perform in higher education or in the work force, Virginia has led the nation in developing effective standardized tests to measure students' abilities. The testing program, called Standards of Learning (SOL), is part of a sweeping reform of Virginia's public education system that began four years ago, when the State Board of Education first began talking about toughening its curriculum (Stallsmith, 1998). The tests will eventually decide whether students graduate, because students will have to pass at least six end-of-course exams. Starting in the 2006-7 school year, seventy percent of a school's students must pass the tests for the school to remain accredited.

The exams test students in grades three, five, eight and in high school in the core academic areas of English, math, science, and history. Between 350,000 and 400,000 students took the tests last spring. This summer, the board appointed eight committees of about 20 people to review the tests and recommend passing ranges.

The results of this testing have implications that are rooted in the Richmond Metropolitan Area's contemporary and historical sociopolitical contexts. Specifically, there appear to be significant correlations between historical and contemporary patterns of racial distribution and SOL test scores.

### *The History*

Chief Justice Earl Warren delineated the expectations for school desegregation in his famous opinion in *Brown v. Board of Education*. Separation in schools solely because of race, he stated, denies minority students equal educational opportunities and thus equal protection under the law. This inequality will persist "even though the physical facilities and other tangible factors may be equal." The Chief Justice went on to note the opinions of social scientists about the psychological damage to black children: segregation "generates a feeling of inferiority as to their status in the community that may affect their hearts and minds in a way unlikely ever to be undone." Thus, the 1954 judicial mandate for desegregation stressed: (a) equality of educational opportunity; (b) non-tangible characteristics of schools, including racial isolation, and their psychological effects; and (c) protection of minority children, rather than benefits to all children (St. John, 1981).

Although the Court suggested quite broad expectations for the benefits of desegregation, many liberals, who welcomed the Court's decision have broadened them still further to include the following propositions: (a) by eliminating the dual school system of the South, desegregation would undermine the caste social structure there and assure equal occupational opportunity for black adults; (b) a unified school system would ensure schools that were indeed equal in facilities, personnel, and curriculum; (c) desegregation would not only improve the self-esteem of black children, but would encourage their educational motivation and vocational aspirations;



(d) white children as well as black children would benefit, because contact with blacks would make them less racially prejudiced (St. John, 84).

### *In Richmond*

Richmond, Virginia has struggled to cope with the social and educational implications of school desegregation for over fifty years. Following the Brown decision, black Virginians looked hopefully to the future. However, after a brief period of uncertainty and caution, much of the white establishment launched a campaign of "massive resistance" to school desegregation that lasted throughout the remainder of the 1950s. Community leaders in Richmond chose not to confront federal authority directly. Instead, they adopted a policy of "passive resistance" ---delay and avoidance under the guise of compliance. For more than a decade after Brown, desegregation in Richmond was either nonexistent or a matter of tokenism (Pratt, 1992).

Richmond's compliance with the state pupil assignment law, system of dual attendance zones, and a network of feeder schools operated within the context of residential segregation to prevent black students from attending white schools in the city. In the mid 1960s Richmond, pressed by the federal government, established an ineffective freedom of choice plan that was later successfully challenged by proponents of integration (Pratt, 1992).

During the early 1970s as Richmond, under judicial direction, "struggled grudgingly to establish a desegregated school system consistent with federal guidelines, many of the city's white residents sought to avoid desegregation with a degree of imagination and resourcefulness never applied to the problem of integration" (Pratt, 1992). Parents resorted to subterfuge, enrolled their children in private schools, or fled to the suburbs to escape desegregation, thus compounding the difficulties of achieving a truly integrated, unitary public school system. Under District

Court Judge Robert R. Merhidge, Jr., Richmond sought to resolve this dilemma by attempting to establish a metropolitan school district embracing the surrounding counties in an effort to achieve more racially balanced schools. However, in 1972 the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that a district judge could not "compel one of the States of the Union to restructure its internal government for the purpose of achieving a racial balance in the assignment of pupils to public school" (Pratt, 1992). The following year, the Supreme Court sustained the lower court's ruling, thus leaving Richmond to cope with a deteriorating educational system that was increasingly impoverished and racially imbalanced. Now that legal barriers to integration have fallen, white flight, poverty, a shrinking tax base, prejudice, and cultural differences have remained, posing an even more substantial barrier than statutes to the accomplishment of the goals Chief Justice Warren expressed for Brown.

#### *Richmond Today*

In a 1998 article in the Richmond Times Dispatch, Virginia Commonwealth University professor John V. Moeser asked Richmonders: "Are we making any progress in the area of regional cooperation? Moeser recounts the "unforgettable" reaction to school desegregation decisions in the sixties and seventies ---Judge Merhidge's life was threatened and public marshals ringed his house. For Moeser, "the public antipathy toward the decision was further evidence of a metropolis deeply polarized over issues related to public schools and race."

The Richmond Metropolitan area today, according to Moeser, is characterized by a less intense racial standoff. But race has not ceased to affect Richmonders' day-to-day lives. African-American and White leaders work side-by-side on numerous regional cooperative efforts. Still, Moeser questions whether collaboration alone will be enough to improve the lives of children, particularly those living in poverty, without

also surmounting the institutional barriers that keep the metropolis divided. In conclusion, Moeser maintains that "how history will judge the greatness of metropolitan leadership will have little to do with election victories or business expansions. Great leaders will be men and women guided by moral imperative rather than political expedience; people so committed to the public good that they place at risk their own self-interest and face the onslaughts of those who preferred the comfortable and the routine."

In the past, dialogue on leadership was concerned primarily with the reputations of individuals and personal accomplishments. Leaders stood apart from the rest of society as people who did special things. The rest were followers who, for reasons ranging from fear to convenience, went along with what the leader communicated or did (Sorenson, 1996).

"By and large, scholars of leadership fed into the historical divide between leader and follower. Times have changed. In the next century, new ways of organizing ourselves, new ways of thinking about leadership, will be required" (Sorenson, 1996).

The leadership of the future must be inclusive and collaborative. To be effective, democracy requires a large number of citizens willing and able to make a difference. All leadership learning must be a collaborative effort ---between those who in a given circumstance are the leaders and those who in the same circumstance are the constituents. A recent report by the Eisenhower leadership group reports:

"As we use the term, citizenship implies actively deciding on, and participating in the change process. To collaborate means to do the work together, to undertake what can best be described as a team effort. Leadership learning cannot be simulated. It must take place in part outside the classroom, in the so-called real world. It demands that students quit for the occasion what Ronald Walters of Howard University calls the "cloistered environment of the schoolhouse," and that they find their own learning laboratory (Sorenson, 1996)

One place we learn to participate is in our schools. Schools powerfully affect

the way we learn, what we learn, and whether ---throughout our lives--- we are willing to meet the challenge of civic engagement.

### *Richmond Education Today*

Current and historical racial and socioeconomic disparities in the Richmond metropolitan area continue to be magnified in its public school system. Suburban Richmond schools ---especially Henrico County--- achieve at some of the highest levels in the state, continually developing new and innovative programs. Richmond's city schools are among the state's lowest performers. Within an academic setting, there is little or no contact among students from different races (black and white) or socioeconomic backgrounds in the Richmond metropolitan area. Forty-five years after Brown, public schools in Richmond are, in many cases, *more* separate and *less* equal than in 1954. Richmond largely avoided the democratic prospect of multiracial dialogue and understanding implied in public school integration.

Recent results of the first SOL tests in Virginia illuminate the striking disparities of achievement between suburban Richmond high school students and their inner-city counterparts. There are undoubtedly enormous discrepancies in hard-to-measure characteristics of the schools attended by poor blacks and those attended by middle-class whites in Richmond, and thus there is support for the conviction that a majority-white school is inevitably better equipped and better staffed than a majority black school. With such massive disparities among their schools, how will Richmond develop the leadership it needs to tackle the increasingly difficult regional challenges it will face as it moves into the next century?

An important first step toward improving Richmond's regional performance has been to identify problem areas and work, among diverse stakeholders, toward mutually acceptable solutions. The intent of this report is to apply that same

reasoning to addressing current disparities between two high schools in the Richmond Metropolitan area with special emphasis on the recent SOL test scores.

### *The Action*

Problems are not always self evident based on the indicators. They need a little push to get the attention of people in and around government. That push is sometimes provided by a focusing event like a crisis or disaster that comes along to call attention to the problem, a powerful symbol that catches on, or the personal experience of a policy maker (Kingdon, 1995). The disparities among Richmond's urban and suburban schools have become largely accepted. Richmond's school system is, in many cases so segregated that students are unaware of the massive disparities that exist. Administrators of Youth Matters (the Community Collaborative for Youth sponsored by the Greater Richmond Chamber of Commerce with the aid of a major planning grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation) note that the youth they work with rarely cite inequities among schools or racial segregation as a major issue because they are so racially isolated that it does not affect them.

Extensive media attention has been given to the lack of success by most Virginia schools on the SOL tests. Perhaps due to Richmond's historically conservative media, little attention has been given to the substantial disparities among test scores. A hot topic in Richmond and throughout Virginia, however, the recent SOL test results, accompanied by a plethora of other school data, can act as a focusing event that will draw attention to disparities among schools in the Richmond metropolitan area.

The objective of this project is therefore three-fold, (1) to analyze the current as well as historical patterns of racial distribution and educational outcomes in the Richmond metropolitan area, (2) to provide current students with this data, and (3) to

create an opportunity for dialogue on the data across school, racial and economic boundaries. This project takes an important first step in developing the type of interaction and leadership that will be essential for the success of future regional cooperation in Richmond. At the very least, this report should serve as a base-point to inform future discussions on issues of race, segregation, and educational outcomes among students in Richmond.

## Literature Review

### *Brown Now*

Segregation is a serious issue (Orfield, 1994). "W.E.B. Dubois was right about the problem of the 21st century. The color line divides us still" (Darling-Hammond, 1998). As we move into a new century and celebrate over forty-five years since the Brown decision, the question facing Richmond (and many other American cities) is whether we will move toward integrated communities in the future or whether we will be relegated to segregated communities (Nagler, 1995). "Most academic studies of school finance, sooner or later, ask us to consider the same question: "How can we achieve more equity in education in America?" (Kozol, 1994). Princeton, New Jersey spends \$4,954 per year to educate each child in its public schools. "Down the road --- and down the social ladder---Patterson spends \$2,674 per child. It is a grim but familiar picture" (Toobin, 1985). But comparisons like this one may provide the catalyst for a much-needed rejuvenation of the civil rights movement. Compounding recent events is new evidence suggesting that continuing poverty and disadvantage among African-Americans are considerably a result of white indifference and prejudice. Certainly, this is one of the conclusions reached by sociologists Douglas S. Massey and Nancy A. Denton in *American Apartheid: Segregation and the Making of the Underclass* (1993). John C. Brittain, who spearheaded the successful *Shel v. O'neil* case (which charged that Connecticut must assume responsibility for the dismal education in Hartford's segregated public schools) notes:

the question always comes up of what difference it would make in having a black child sit next to a white child in school. It does not make any difference, except that children should be exposed to a multiracial and multi-income environment because in addition to learning their three R's, children learn from each other to live cooperatively with each other. And particularly the sociological results have shown that children of color benefit more from an integrated educational experience

than a segregated educational experience, not necessarily in their test scores, but more in their life chances and life experiences, particularly life aspirations. And the studies have shown that the children of an integrated education tend to have greater ease and familiarity with integrated work places and living spaces. And integrated work and living places are generally associated with better places, higher values, higher incomes, better living standards (Nagel, 1995).

One of the plaintiffs in the *Shel* case is a white family who complained about the racial segregation their children will face if not allowed to grow up in an integrated society. For Americans of all backgrounds, the allocation of opportunity in a society that is becoming ever more dependent on knowledge and education is a source of great anxiety and concern. At the center of these debates are interpretations of the gaps in educational achievement between white and non-Asian minority students as measured by standardized test scores (Darling-Hammond, 1998). The presumption guiding much of the conversation is that equal opportunity now exists; therefore, continued low levels of achievement on the part of minority students must be a function of genes, culture, or a lack of effort and will. Richard Herrnstein and Charles Murray's *The Bell Curve* and Stephan and Abigail Thernstrom's *America in Black and White*, both assert that (1) intelligence is largely inherited, fixed, and distributed unequally across groups; (2) that it is represented by a single measure of cognitive ability (the g factor) that is predictive of life success; and (3) that it is not substantially affected by education, health care, or other environmental factors. A review of the substantial body of relevant research by Linda Darling-Hammond (1995) demonstrated that (a) education makes a profound difference in attainment; (b) educational opportunities are more unequally distributed in this society than nearly any other; and (c) when students have equal access to high-quality curricula, teachers, and school resources, disparities in achievement narrow sharply. Darling-Hammond writes (1998) that



“these assumptions [those of Hernstein and Murray] which undergird this debate miss an important reality: educational outcomes for minority children are much more a function of their unequal access to key educational resources, including skilled teachers and quality curriculum.”

The U.S. educational system is one of the most unequal in the industrialized world, and students routinely receive dramatically different learning opportunities based on their social status (Orfield, 1995). The wealthiest 10 percent of U.S. school districts spend nearly ten times more than the poorest ten percent, and spending ratios of 3 to 1 are common within states (Darling-Hammond, 1998). Still, the prevailing view is that if students do not achieve it is their own fault.

Many of these inequalities are drawn along color lines. Massey and Denton (1993) illustrate the ways which residential segregation, intense poverty, and the emergence of what they describe as “an oppositional culture that devalues work, schooling, and marriage and that stresses attitudes and behaviors that are antithetical and often hostile to success in the larger economy” have interacted with one another to create a largely black and uneducated underclass locked in poverty and alienation.

As late as the 1960s most African-American, Latino, and Native American students were educated in wholly segregated schools funded at rates many times lower than those serving whites and were excluded from many higher education institutions entirely. The end of legal segregation followed by efforts to equalize spending (since 1970) has made a substantial difference for student achievement. On every major national test, including the National Assessment of Educational Progress, the gap in minority and white students' test scores narrowed substantially between 1970 and 1990, especially for elementary school students. On the scholastic Aptitude Tests (SAT), the scores of African-American students climbed 54 points

between 1976 and 1994, while those of whites students remained stable (Darling-Hammond, 1998). Nonetheless, the educational experiences of minority students continue to be substantially separate and unequal.

The rapid growth of segregation for Latinos and African Americans in American cities occurs by both race and poverty (Orfield, 1994). Two-thirds of minority students still attend schools that are predominantly minority, most of them located in central cities and funded well below those in neighboring suburban districts (Darling-Hammond, 1998). The segregation of Latinos and African Americans is increasing. The decision by the supreme court to allow segregated neighborhood schools in 1990, albeit only in some instances, has begun to undo the desegregation work of the 1950s (Orfield, Bachmeier, James, Eitle, 1997). Recent analyses of data prepared for school finance cases in Alabama, New York, New Jersey, Louisiana, and Texas have found that in every tangible measure ---from qualified teachers to curriculum offerings--schools serving greater numbers of students of color had significantly fewer resources than schools serving mostly white students. A study of Montgomery County, Maryland conducted by the Harvard Project on School Desegregation (1994) showed that the share of African American and Latino children in schools with relatively high levels of poverty was many times that of whites and rapidly increasing in recent years as white exposure to poverty remained at relatively low levels. Since concentrated poverty is very strongly related to unequal achievement at the school level, the rapid growth of concentrated poverty conditions for minority students suggests growing inequality in educational experiences and the development of more schools suffering from the dual problems of racial and economic isolation (Orfield, 1994). In a 1991 report to congress, William L. Taylor and Dianne Piche noted that:

Inequitable systems of school finance inflict disproportionate harm on minority and economically disadvantaged students. On an inter-state basis, such students are concentrated in

states, primarily in the South, that have the lowest capacities to finance public education. On an intrastate basis, many of the states with the widest disparities in educational expenditures are large industrial states. In these states, many minorities and economically disadvantaged students are located in property-poor urban districts which fare the worst in educational expenditures...(or) in rural districts which suffer from fiscal inequity.

There is an extremely strong relationship between concentrated poverty and low academic achievement. Mastery test scores in Hartford and its suburbs, according to Prof. David Armor of George Mason University (Judson, 1993), can be predicted almost entirely by looking at the income, college education, and number of single parents in each community. Concentrated poverty means that teachers and administrators have to work with much higher numbers of students with untreated health problems, developmental disabilities, one parent and unstable home situations, who often move frequently even during school years, who are more likely to be native speakers of a language other than English, and many other differences (Orfield, 1994). On average, these children's parents have much less connection to the job market. These children are also disproportionately affected by concentrated crime, drugs, violence, and social norms of teen pregnancy in their communities. On average, there is much less parental involvement with school activities in such schools (Orfield, 1994). A recent national study (1994) by the Harvard Project on School Desegregation showed that segregated minority schools are fourteen times more likely than predominantly white schools to have a majority of poor children. The schools are often likely to be seen as stressful, less rewarding work environments and the most qualified teachers are likely to transfer out. According to the Harvard study, the national pattern of unequal achievement in high poverty schools is also apparent in Montgomery County. Although aware of the link between concentrated poverty and educational inequality, educational leaders in Montgomery chose to attack the

problem through relatively small added resources for some of the high poverty schools rather than a plan to prevent the spread of such segregation. A Maryland equity suit filed in 1978, although unsuccessful, led the state to reexamine the school funding system. When a task force set up by the governor offered its suggestions five years later, it argued that 100 percent equality was too expensive. The goal, it said, was 75 percent equality ---meaning that the poorest districts should be granted no less than three quarters of the funds at the disposal of the average district (Kozol, 1994).

The Harvard study also showed that although many districts proclaim that they can make segregated schools equal, none demonstrate evidence that they have accomplished it on a broad scale. Orfield (1994) writes that this is a very difficult task because "many critically important differences exist in school communities, particularly when segregation is by poverty as well as race or ethnicity." Harvard's April 1994 report on four districts implementing large compensatory programs found no evidence of equal outcomes. In a May report, it was found that when Norfolk, Virginia returned to neighborhood schools it rapidly concentrated poverty and educational inequality and that parent participation in those schools actually declined. Given this relationship, it is very important to examine the ways in which different approaches contribute to segregation and greater or lesser inequality among segregated schools.

Much of the literature on public policy making emphasizes that problems are often not addressed by policy makers until adequate solutions are in hand (Kingdon, 1995). "Until we have proven methods of making segregated schools equal at the system level, when we allow segregation to spread, we are creating schools that are extremely likely to produce inferior education which will primarily affect minority students" (Orfield, 1994). Although Montgomery County's 1990 *Study of Minority*

*Achievement* provided no data on growing segregation by race and income and its relationship to unequal levels of student achievement, the overall relationship between segregation and educational inequality remains very powerful and is evident in the county's own data.

Attention to school segregation was at its peak more than two decades ago. The basic emphasis of educational policy since the Reagan Administration's 1983 *Nation at Risk* report has been on raising educational standards. That report and most other educational reform documents since that time simply ignore segregation and assume that there is a way to make schools isolated by race and poverty equal, primarily through increasingly demanding curriculum testing methods (Orfield, 1994).

"If you look at the institutions in the community --the home, the church, the school and any neighborhood recreational facilities--- the school still has the most significant impact on the child" (Nagler, 1995). Since schools are central, defining institutions in neighborhoods as well as greater communities, accepting school resegregation also involves accepting the spread of residential segregation. The intense attack on court ordered busing rests largely on the public belief that the courts are artificially interfering with normal neighborhoods and communities. A central premise of the early Supreme Court decisions was, however, that the courts were attempting to correct violations with deep roots in both school and housing discrimination. When the court later decided to limit and then to permit termination of desegregation fundamentally different conclusions about housing were relied on --- that housing segregation simply had happened for some unknowable reason or that it was a natural force, separate from schools, that courts could do nothing about. The changing conception of housing, often reached with little or no empirical basis, has provided a principal grounds for judicial acceptance of segregated education (Orfield.

1995). According to Massey and Denton (1993), residential segregation, which has played a "catalytic role in this downward cycle, continues to exist because white America has not had the political will or desire to dismantle it."

Because *Brown* focused on physical integration and not on remedying the effects of racial discrimination such as lower economic status and racially-indentifiable housing patterns, many black children still receive a poor quality education. Holistic remedies including quality education are needed to achieve racial equality (Grant, 1993). Research shows that minorities comprise the bulk of the US work force, and academic success is positively related to socioeconomic advancement. Although correctional measures may not achieve all of the desired results, they could clear many socioeconomic roadblocks to a favorable and accessible educational system for poor minorities (Clarke, 1996).

### *Desegregation and Educational Outcomes*

The task of this section of the literature review is two fold ---to assess the literature on the outcomes of school desegregation in regard to the academic achievement, psychological health, and racial attitudes of children, black and white, and to examine literature which has been focused on the long-term outcomes of desegregation, including its effects on career attainment and adult social roles. *The Effects of School Desegregation on Children: A New Look at the Research Evidence* (St. John, 1981), which reviews twenty years of published and unpublished research on this topic, over a hundred separate studies, is a major source for this review as it provides a thorough examination of early literature on the impact of desegregation on educational outcomes. In addition to this, perhaps simpler task, of assessing the outcomes of school desegregation in regard to academic achievement, psychological health, and racial attitudes of children, I will examine the research on the long-term

benefits of desegregated schooling, including the facilitation of African-American inclusion in important areas of U.S. life.

In examining this literature, it is important to reflect on the intended effects of school desegregation on students, critically examine mistakes made in the implementation process, and question whether the large body of research on school desegregation was helpful in making desegregation work (Wells, 1994).

All reviewers stress two problems that beset the literature (St. John, 1981). First, there is an absence of well developed and commonly accepted theory to guide the questions researchers ask or the way they interpret their findings. Although most researchers acknowledge some strand of social theory in the introduction to their final report, *rarely do they ground their concepts, methodologies, or variables in a common body of theory*. This hinders the comparability of findings and the accumulation of knowledge in their field. Second, much of the research on school desegregation has so many methodological limitations that the validity of the findings is in serious doubt (St. John, 1981). For example, there are far more cross-sectional than longitudinal studies. That is, they compare children who are in segregated and desegregated schools at one point in time rather than matching children by background factors, randomly assigning them to segregated and non-segregated schools, and then comparing the results. We cannot be sure, therefore, that the desegregated children were not originally more academically oriented, or more self-confident, or less racially biased than the segregated children before the two groups were exposed to different types of schools. Many studies that have been done which assess the impact of desegregation also lack a proper control group: for instance, if a whole district desegregates, there are no segregated children with whom to compare the desegregated. Comparisons with past records may prove little, since changed

conditions outside of school rather than the percentage of whites in schools may be affecting the children.

Control of contaminating factors is not the only problem of desegregation research. "Size and randomness of sample, definition of key outcome variables, tests of statistical significance --these and other aspects of the research may be flawed. Such problems are so common (often because of characteristics of the field situation rather than blindness of the investigator) that a purist might conclude that there is no research worth reviewing" (St. John, 1981). In any case, "each reviewer must decide where to draw the line between studies that are satisfactorily executed and those that are not, and must decide which findings to treat as real and which are non findings" (St. John, 86).

In the face of such methodological problems, the prejudices of either the researcher or the reviewer can make a serious difference in the conclusions they reach. Especially in the case of desegregation, the impact of past policies may affect the lens (degree of objectivity) through which individuals perceive the data presented. "Policy makers must be aware of this danger but should not exaggerate it, provided the research is directed by those trained as social scientists. The ethic of honesty is very strong in the discipline, and conflicting findings can in fact result from myriad factors other than bias" (St. John, 86).

With these cautions in mind, I will consider the extent to which expectations for the positive outcome of racial mixing in schools were realized (1981) as a means of determining the effect of desegregation. Utilizing St. John's basic framework, I will focus on three major goals for desegregating schools: closing the black/white gap in academic achievement; improving the self-concept of and motivation of black children; and encouraging more favorable racial attitudes and behavior among children of both



racess.

### *Academic Achievement*

In *Equality of Educational Opportunity* (Coleman et al., 1966) the proportion white in a school was found to be positively related to verbal achievement, but this finding disappeared when background characteristics of the children were held constant. However, reanalysis by the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights (1967) of some of the same data for the high-school level indicated that the racial composition of the classroom did have an independent relation to achievement. Black children in a majority-white classroom tended to have higher scores than black children in majority-black classrooms. A partial reason for this correlation is probably that students are assigned to classrooms on the basis of test scores. Nevertheless the commission also found that earlier the grade in which blacks reported having white classmates, the higher their achievement.

In her first review, *School Desegregation: Outcomes for Children* (1975), St. John summarized the findings of 64 smaller studies, of which 13 were cross-sectional, 14 longitudinal but without a control group, and 37 quasi-experimental in that measurements were taken at two points in time from two samples that differed in the racial mixtures of their schools. These studies were of children of varying ages, kindergarten through high school, but most often at the elementary level. They were conducted in all regions of the country, in cities of varying size. Desegregation came about in at least four ways ---through residential change; through school board rezoning, or closing of a segregated school and transfer of pupils with or without busing; through voluntary transfer of selected pupils to distant schools; and through total district desegregations in which all children were assigned to schools of the same racial mix. There was no evidence that region, city size, method of desegregation, or

length of exposure to mixed schooling affected the relation of racial mix and academic outcome.

St. John concluded that these studies did not provide strong, clear evidence that desegregation will rapidly close the black/white gap in achievement, "although it has rarely lowered and sometimes raised the scores of black children. Improvement has been more often reported in the early grades, in arithmetic, and in schools over 50% white, but even here the gains have usually been mixed, intermittent or non-significant. White achievement has usually been mixed, intermittent, or non-significant. White achievement has been unaffected in schools that remained majority white but significantly lower in majority black schools" (St. John, 1981).

Crain (1976) challenged St. John's conclusion that only 11 of the 64 studies she reviewed had an adequate research design (pretests and post tests for experimental control groups, matching on family background, application of tests of significance to the results). St. John reported that the findings of those 11 studies were wholly positive in one case, mixed in 6 cases, and no difference in 4 cases. Crain applied a different criterion of methodological rigor to the 64 studies and counted that 19 met his standard (St. John, 1981). "The most common results for all grades were positive and significant; and in three, significant results occurred simultaneously with significant negative results. None of the 19 studies showed results that were more often negative than positive" (Crain, 1976). Crain neglected to clarify his criteria or name the studies he selected.

Four studies conducted between the years 1974 and 1977 attempted to discover relationships between desegregation and student achievement. In Harrisburg, findings were mixed (Beers and Reardon, 1974); in Pasadena, city-wide test scores of both blacks and whites declined in the four years following

desegregation (Kurtz, 1975); and in Grand Rapids, no significant difference appeared between the segregated schools and the desegregated (Schellenberg and Halteman, 1976); and in Indianapolis, the trend was positive, but not significantly so (Patchen et al., 1977).

In a successive bibliography of school desegregation literature between 1963-1975, Weinburg covered most of the same studies that St. John did, but included four or five investigations which St. John missed, the findings of which he judged to be more positive than negative. The most significant of these is Crain's (1973) evaluation of the Emergency School Assistance program, which reported academic gains for desegregated black male high school students (apparently not for female students). In spite of such evidence, Weinburg's conclusion may be exaggerated (St. John, 88): "Overall, desegregation does indeed have a positive effect on minority achievement levels" (Weinburg, 1975). St. John noted, in her second review (1981) that the "impression of overall positive effects results from the fact that when findings are mixed, Weinburg regularly reports only the positive results and ignores the grade levels or subject areas in which children made no gains or lost ground." (St. John, 1981) (see also Weinburg, 1977.)

A close examination of the studies Weinburg categorized as having positive outcomes (Miller, 1977) revealed that: (a) in a number of instances the positive outcome cannot with any certainty be attributed to desegregation; and (b) in certain other cases the outcomes are not particularly positive. According to Miller, Crain's categorization of the studies St. John had examined yielded only a slightly more favorable outcome than her own regarding the effect of desegregation on minority academic achievement. Miller concluded that "simply distributing students in each school of a district as a whole, without simultaneous initiation of numerous other

programs, is very unlikely to provide a desirable kind of integrated learning experience, or to improve academic achievement of minority children" (Miller, 2). Clement, Eisenhart, and Wood's review of the literature (1976) reached the same conclusion.

The studies referred to above used three different measures of the educational outcomes of desegregation: grades, IQ scores, and achievement test scores. St. John (1981) notes that each has its drawbacks:

"Because teacher-assigned marks tend to be normalized in relation to the classroom mean, disadvantaged children entering mixed classrooms can be expected to experience a decline in their marks. To the extent of which IQ tests measure stable characteristics in pupils, they are insensitive to changes in the school environment. Both IQ and achievement tests suffer from the fact that they are more or less culturally biased. Not standardized or validated on a population similar to that being tested, they tend to have low predictive validity for underprivileged minority-group children and differentiate poorly among them. (St. John, 89)

Another measure of educational outcomes (used infrequently in the years immediately following desegregation because it entails long-term or follow-up studies) is educational attainment ---the degree to which those who attend desegregated schools (a) graduate from high school, and (b) pursue higher education.

In recent decades, nationwide school retention rates have climbed dramatically for all youth. Despite this trend, a number of investigators have noted an alarming disparity among high school withdrawals, suspensions, and expulsions for black and minority students, and white students. This trend was first noted in studies by Bryant, 1968; Clement et al., 1976; Felice and Richardson, 1977 which examined desegregating school systems in the South. Recently, this disparity has been noted in the popular media.

At the other end of the spectrum is the finding that voluntary participation in busing programs that bring ghetto children to middle-class suburban schools results in increased college attendance among graduates. Armor (1972) found that bused

students were much more likely to enter college than their siblings who remained in city schools, although the college dropout rate was higher for the bused students, so that by the end of the sophomore year, 59 percent of the bused students and 56 percent of their siblings were enrolled full-time in college. Perry (1973) reported that 94 percent of inner-city youth placed by the ABC (A Better Chance) program in independent schools entered college, compared with 62 percent of matched non-ABC students, and the colleges entered by ABC students were more selective. Crain and Mahard (1978), analyzing data from the National Longitudinal Study of the senior class of 1972, reported that in the South black graduates of predominately white high schools are less likely to attend and survive in college than those from predominantly black schools. In the North, however, the opposite was true: black college attendance and survival are higher for the graduates of predominantly white schools. Analysis of the data led the author to conclude that "self selection" may be responsible for the apparent negative impact in the South, but cannot account for the positive impact in the North.

Crain's earlier (1971) survey of black adults in the North indicated that the benefits of school desegregation do not end with college attendance. He found that those who had attended integrated public schools had better jobs and higher incomes throughout at least three decades of their lives, although the differences in income were not accounted for by higher educational attainment or more favorable social background. A retrospective survey of this type cannot demonstrate that integrated schooling was the cause of later successes, however, the results do suggest that desegregation has long-term economic benefits (St. John, 90).

### *Self-Concept and Motivation*

Three reviews on the psychological effects of school desegregation appeared

in the years 1975 and 1976: Epps, 1975; St. John, 1975; and Clement et al., 1976. An important book by Gerard and Miller (1975) also appeared, which summarized their ten year study of school desegregation in Riverside, California, and reported on their analysis of psychological outcomes.

### *Anxiety*

St. John (1975) summarized 7 studies of anxiety in desegregated black children as indicating that although, in general, black children show more sign of anxiety than white children, there is no significant increase following desegregation. Gerard and Miller (1975) reported that over time younger black children display a much larger increase in general anxiety than do younger Anglo or Mexican-American children. Epps (1975) cited a study by Mercer, Coleman, and Harloe (1974) as evidence that the impact of desegregation on anxiety depends on the individual educational environment of the school.

### *Aspiration*

St. John (1975) reported that a significant positive relationship between percent white in a school and either educational aspiration (16 studies) or occupational aspiration (13 studies) is rarely found. Epps (1975) drew a somewhat different conclusion from the evidence: "No study of black aspirations has shown that they are substantially lowered by introducing these students into a desegregating system."

Veroff and Peele (1969) and Gerard and Miller (1975) noted a reduction in aspiration on a laboratory task on the part of desegregated children as evidence of increased realism and hence positive gain. St. John notes (1981) that "if we adopt this line of reasoning, we need not consider that a lower aspiration on the part of desegregated children (as measured by a pen-and paper test) lends support to school segregation, but rather that desegregated youth may have more realistic ambitions

than those in segregated schools" (St. John, 91).

### *Self Concept*

St. John (1981) noted that many researchers have found that black children tend to indicate a higher degree of self esteem than white children, but that desegregation often has a discouraging effect (St. John, 91). Twenty-five studies of the relation of black self concept and school percentage white were summarized in St. John (1975). Of these, 9 found that segregation has a negative effect (3 significantly so), 7 no effect, 5 mixed effects, and four a significantly positive effect. Rosenberg and Simmons (1971) found that self-esteem was significantly lower in desegregated schools. Academic self-concept of blacks is much more negatively related to school percent white than is self concept in general. Gerard and Miller (1975) say that they found no support for the assumption that desegregation would increase the self esteem of minority (in this case primarily Chicano) children. Instead, academic adjustment is disturbed, while that of the Anglo is not. St. John (1981) concluded that desegregation "tends to threaten the self-esteem of minority children" (St. John, 91). Epps (1975) concludes that desegregation has no effect on black self esteem ---or lowers it only slightly. In an earlier study of Boston sixth graders (1971), St. John found that although academic self concept was related negatively to present school percent white, it was related positively to past school percent white, suggesting that the long-term benefits of a more challenging academic environment may be greater than the short-term discouragement involved.

### *Sense of Environmental Control*

As first noted by Coleman (1966), the sense of control over their environment for black children is regularly found to be more positively related to school percent white than are any of the other psychological outcomes. The Commission on Civil Rights

(1967) and McPartland (1968) substantiated this finding. Gerard and Miller (1975) report that desegregation had no effect on this variable for the grade-school children they studied in Riverside.

### *Racial Attitudes and Behavior*

“With regard to the educational and psychological effects of desegregation, the expectation has been that minority youth would be the beneficiaries. Racial prejudice, on the other hand, has been seen as a white problem” (St. John, 92).

As a result, change in attitudes of white youth has been a major goal of integrated educational systems. Allport (1954) and other social psychologists (Amir, 1969) have used theory and experimental evidence to support the proposition that contact between ethnic groups leads to reduced prejudice, but only if such contact is prolonged, intimate, noncompetitive, between equals in pursuit of common goals, and sanctioned by those in authority. St. John (1981) believes researchers have been “too quick to assume that an integrated classroom satisfies these conditions.”

Three types of studies are available: (a) comparison of racial beliefs or attitudes in segregated and desegregated schools; (b) studies of interracial friendships, choice or behavior in desegregated settings that attempt to relate such behavior to previous interracial contact, to racial percentages in the classroom, or to time spent in the desegregated setting; and (c) case studies of racially mixed schools or classrooms. St. John (1975) summarized 41 studies of the first two types, spanning the years 1937 to 1973, many of them in northern high schools. For both blacks and whites, positive findings are less common than negative findings, but in many cases there is no effect or the effects are mixed. In her 1981 review, St. John notes that positive findings are somewhat more likely for younger children, for black males or white females, for situations in which the races are not too diverse in social class background, and where



the community and school climate is not markedly hostile.

Case studies confirm the inconclusive results of comparative studies and suggest the great range in atmospheres from school to school. School climates ranged from considerable friendly interaction, peaceful but separate coexistence, and in some cases violent conflict or tension. Gerard and Miller (1975) found that following desegregation ethnic separation increased over time for both friendship and work partner choices, while Schofield and Sagar (1976, 1977) found that in a well-integrated setting, racial desegregation decreased over time for sixth- and seventh-graders, while it increased for eighth-graders enrolled in a predominantly white accelerated academic track or a predominantly black regular track.

A review of literature by Cohen (1975) corroborates St. John's conclusion. Cohen refers to several additional articles (Williams and Vendetti, 1969; Wade and Wilson, 1971; Patterson and Smits, 1972; Coats, 1972; and Bullock and Braxton, 1973), but writes that the studies which she reviewed yield the "same mixed results as the studies reviewed by St. John."

### *Conditions of Effective School Desegregation*

In 1975, St. John suggested two basic reasons for the mixed and inconclusive findings on outcomes of desegregation for children. "First, desegregation is a multifaceted phenomenon that can be simultaneously beneficial and detrimental. Second, whether the benefits outweigh the disadvantages depends both on a child's individual needs, and (more importantly) on how desegregation is implemented by school staff" (St. John, 94). Orfield in a 1975 essay; an Educational Testing Service survey and interview study of effective school desegregation in ninety-six elementary schools and seventy two high schools (Forehand, Ragosta, and Rock, 1976); and a set of principles relevant to successful schools desegregation, drafted by Miller (1977) for

the guidance of the Los Angeles school board as it moved to comply with court ordered school desegregation and signed by a number of social scientists also provided research evidence on this topic. Literature reviews by Weinburg (1975), Epps (1975), and Cohen (1975) all indicate key variables which were found to affect educational outcomes in light of desegregation. As St. John notes (1981), "no matter how convincing their sets of principles, all of these authors have been handicapped by the paucity of hard empirical evidence." The following categories relate to some of the major themes which St. John identified among these works.

### *Role of the Principal*

Orfield (1975) writes that it is the principal who must provide the educational leadership and see that the social climate supports integration. Willie's (1973) case study also emphasizes the role of the principal. Forehand, Ragosta, and Rock (1976) found that principals' racial attitudes tend to have a direct influence on the views of teachers in elementary schools and on teaching practices in high schools; variables which, in turn, affect the racial attitudes of students. Collins and Nobbitt (1976) and Miller (1977) stressed the principal's role in communicating with parents and involvement of the community in the desegregation process.

Boxton and Prichard (1977) found that "the power erosion of the black principal following desegregation to be endemic in one southern state, and to have potential serious consequences for black pupils because it deprives them of a role model and leads to a decline in school discipline." In 1976, Forehand, Ragosta, and Rock found that "the racial attitudes of black high school students reflected their perception of the fairness of the school to them, the absence of conflict over discipline, and the equality of influence of black and white teachers, students, and parents.

### *Teacher Selection and Training*

According to St. John (1981), "the experts agree on the importance of developing an interracial staff at all levels and of assuring minority and majority group faculty equal status in the life of the school" (St. John, 95). Studies by Entwisle and Webster (1974), Darkenwald (1975), and Erickson (1975) suggest that faculty and counselors are more effective in raising the expectations of students of their own racial background. Gerard and Miller (1975) found that minority children whose teachers informed them of intellectual inadequacies at the beginning of the term showed much greater decline in verbal achievement than peers who had class with less biased teachers. Brookover and colleagues (1976) found that students sense of academic futility contributed more than any other climate to low achievement. "High- and low-achieving predominantly black schools were distinguished from one another by the fact that the teachers in the high-achieving schools did not 'write-off' their slow students but arranged more instruction time and gave a great deal of positive reinforcement" (St. John, 95). 1975 lab experiments by Cohen also affirm the need for black and white instructors to act as models for high expectations.

St. John (1981) writes that racial attitudes of teachers are the key variable. Black and white students under teachers rated as "fair" were significantly friendlier to one another than those in classes under teachers who were not rated as such (St. John, 1971). Orfield (1975), Forehand, Ragosta, and Rock (1976) both call for careful screening of candidates for teaching positions and innovative and flexible techniques of in-service training.

### *Curriculum and Instruction*

Orfield (1975) reports that successful desegregation demands that teachers make modifications to teaching methods. A major emphasis must be on how teachers

can address and serve multiple achievement levels within a single classroom without resegregating on a class-by-class basis. Crain (1973, The Emergency School Assistance Program) found that tracking had a consistently negative influence on students' attitudes toward integration at the elementary level. It is also interesting to note that Koslin and associates, in a 1972 study, found that interracial attitudes were more favorable when classrooms had approximately equal numbers of black and white students. St. John (1981) writes that "in order to minimize the adverse affects of the achievement gap, investigators advise individualization of instruction (Orfield, 1975), use of competency-based testing (Miller, 1977), extra instruction time for slower students, and team competition rather than individual competition in academic subjects (Brookover et al., 1976)." Slavin (1977, 1978) has found repeatedly that seventh-graders in classes with cooperative learning teams of four or five students of different races/ability levels, make greater academic gains and develop more cross-racial friends than similar seventh graders in traditional classrooms.

"The importance of the use of integrated texts and multicultural curricula is stressed by all experts (see especially Forehand, Ragosta, and Rock, 1976)" (St. John, 97). Lachat (1972) found more friendly interaction among races in a high school using all of the above practices than in one which was simply integrated. Orfield (1975), however, warns that teachers need substantial training in the creation and implementation of more integrated teaching units.

### *Equal Status Contact*

Miller (1977) wrote that "desegregation plans should explicitly implement the the conditions for favorable contact." In this sense, contact should be on an equal status basis, intimate, prolonged, in pursuit of common goals, and sanctioned by those in authority positions. Forehand, Ragosta, and Rock (1976) found that race relations

were more favorable in schools where the staff made an effort to structure class assignments to maximize this type of equal status contact. Numerous studies (Forehand, 1976; John and Lewis, 1974; and Rosenberg and Simmons, 1971) found that the narrower the gap among socioeconomic status, the more effective equal-status contact is ---regardless of race. Pettigrew (et al. 1973) states that because it is impossible to equalize social standing in our present societies' desegregated classrooms, teachers must look for innovative ways of minimizing the differences that children bring to school and of creating "equal status, dignity, and access to resources within the contact situation itself."

### *The Continuing Significance of Desegregation*

Much of the attention in the early post-*Brown* period focused on the question of whether school desegregation would have positive or negative impacts on the academic achievement, self-esteem, and interracial attitudes of Blacks and Whites. More recently, scholars have focused their attention on the long-term effects of desegregated schooling, including its impact on career attainment and adult social roles. "This focus has been especially important for African Americans and other excluded minorities in gauging the extent to which school desegregation has promoted the broader principle of minority inclusion" (Dawkins and Braddock, 1994). Research on the long-term benefits of desegregated schooling such as success in college and the job market has recently entered legal and public policy debates over current desegregation issues (Coughlin, 1991).

Using a framework designed by Gordon (1964) which delineates seven dimensions of assimilation to identify the mechanisms by which ethnic and racial minority groups are incorporated into society's mainstream, Dawkins and Braddock concluded (1994) that "the pace of structural assimilation ---especially entry into the

critical institutions of education, politics, and employment--- has been much slower for some groups (e.g. African Americans).“ Structural assimilation is the process involving the entry of minority groups into the institutional activities of the larger society at both primary (e.g. religious worship, intermarriage, and recreational activities) and secondary (e.g. employment, politics, and education) levels. Dawkins and Braddock (1994) present a model that depicts the process of African American inclusion in career attainment which illustrates the impact of school desegregation on that process. The model assumes that career attainment of African Americans is (a) directly influenced by educational and social psychological factors along with systemic barriers and (b) indirectly affected by family background and social origin factors (Dawkins, 1989). “The role of segregated and desegregated school experiences is especially important in this process because elementary and secondary desegregated school experiences affect not only social, psychological, and academic achievement outcomes but also such crucial factors as college attendance and access to broader social networks that provide the job information, contacts, and sponsorships necessary for career advancement” (Dawkins and Braddock, 1994). These experiences also provide the socialization for aspirations and entrance to higher level occupations, development of the interpersonal skills useful in interracial contexts, and reduced social mobility leading to increased tolerance and willingness to participate in desegregated environments (Braddock and Dawkins, 1984).

A number of similar studies have begun to look beyond the impact of school desegregation on such short-term outcomes as academic performance and interracial attitudes to an examination of such longer term consequences as college attendance, employment, and adult social contacts. This broader perspective is essential to assess progress in measuring desegregations’ long-term impact.

Braddock (1980) found that Black students from majority white schools are more likely to enroll at majority White four-year colleges based on a 1972 survey of Black students attending four year colleges in Florida. Similarly, McPartland and Braddock (1980) found that Black students from majority White elementary-secondary schools are more likely to enroll in and persist at majority White two- and four -year colleges based on a Black sub sample of the National Longitudinal Study (NLS) high school class of 1972. Much of this evidence is based on research from national longitudinal studies which permit assessments related to career attainment and other outcomes to be made over time extending from childhood to adult social roles (Braddock and Dawkins, 1994). The studies tend to show that desegregation of schools lead to desegregation later in life including areas that are important to career attainment. Braddock's 1986 study linking desegregated secondary schooling to college and major field of study choice implies that school desegregation can indirectly affect the career income potential of African American students.

A 1972 study by Crain and Weisman found that Blacks from desegregated elementary-secondary schools are more likely to have White social contacts and live in integrated neighborhoods. Braddock, McPartland, and Trent (1984) found that Blacks and Whites from desegregated elementary-secondary schools are more likely to work in desegregated firms; Blacks from predominantly White colleges are also more likely to work in desegregated firms. Green (1981-82), utilizing a ten year follow-up of 1971 Black freshman surveyed for the American Council on Education, found that Black adult males who graduated from majority-White high schools or majority-White colleges and grew up in majority-White neighborhoods are more likely to have White work associates and friends. McPartland and Braddock (1983;89) found that Northern Blacks from majority White high schools are more likely to have White

coworkers. In the South, this relationship is also positive, but confounded with community racial composition. Desegregated Blacks evaluate White co-workers and supervisors more positively than do segregated Blacks.

An especially interesting study which utilized a Black sub-sample of the National Longitudinal Survey high school class of 1972 found that Southern Black males from desegregated schools have greater expectations of entering high-status, nontraditional occupations. To lend support to studies linking desegregation and career attainment, a 1984 study by Crain found that employers give preference to Blacks from desegregated (i.e. suburban schools). Crain (1984) found that Blacks who attend desegregated schools are more likely to move into integrated neighborhoods and have a greater number of White friends. Pearce (1980) found that communities with a community wide school desegregation plan have more integration in housing and less "racial steering" by the real estate industry. In contrast, Pearce, Crain, and Farley's 1984 study of twenty-five large cities showed that central cities where schools are desegregated have more desegregation in housing.

In a more recent study (1986), Braddock concluded that Blacks who attend desegregated schools are more likely to attend desegregated colleges and (in two year colleges) to major in scientific or technical fields. These studies further suggest that desegregation at the elementary-secondary school levels is important in breaking the self-perpetuating cycle of segregation. They reveal that the majority of African Americans in the South who attended segregated secondary public schools pursue their post-secondary education at historically Black four year colleges, while most African Americans in the North who attended segregated secondary schools tend to enroll in predominantly Black community colleges in urban areas. In both the North and South, however, attendance at desegregated high schools leads to enrollment in



predominantly White colleges (Braddock and Dawkins, 1994).

Braddock and Dawkins (1994) write that the "racial composition of the high school also contributes to the development and persistence of plans by African Americans to enter professional occupations in fields where Blacks are under represented (i.e. non-traditional occupations)." Crain's 1970 study suggests that Northern Black male graduates of integrated high schools held higher status jobs and earned higher incomes than their counterparts from segregated schools. Dawkins (1983) study, which confirmed that desegregation had a positive impact on African American males' expectations for entering high-status nontraditional careers.

### *The Significance of the Literature*

In a 1994 article, Amy Wells (of the University of California) argued that the short-term effects research, which received greater attention and held a greater sway in the policy arena, has traditionally been less informative. This literature, all too often, has tried to draw broad sweeping conclusions regarding whether desegregation "worked" based on narrow criteria that were difficult to measure. Unfortunately, much of the research on the impact of school desegregation was guided by policy-makers who wanted quick answers and, as a result, has come to stand as a kind of scholarship guided "largely by public concerns and public issues, not by theoretically generated empirical questions" (Prager, 1986).

In a late 1970s critique of school desegregation research, Orfield points out that *Brown* spoke not of test scores but damage to the "hearts and minds" of black children forced to attend segregated schools. It is worth noting that only recently has research on the effects of school desegregation on students begun to improve. Fewer researchers are focusing on the input/output effects of desegregation and more (as noted in the first section of the literature review) are focusing on processes of school

desegregation. We now know more about what policies and practices make for effective desegregation, and we have a more thorough understanding of the long-term effects of desegregation on the life chances of students. More specifically, and perhaps most importantly, we also now have evidence of how access to higher-status institutions can open doors and opportunities (Wells, 1994). Unfortunately, the newer, higher quality research may be too little too late. Recent evidence must not be ignored. Current educational research on correlations between segregation, poverty, educational and later-life outcomes must be considered and used to inform national and regional educational policy making.

## **Methodology**

The methodology used to collect the data for this project draws on methods used in several types of research and took place in two distinct stages, each of which relates to the following research questions:

**R1:** *What is the relation between educational outcomes (SOL test scores, etc.) and historical/current patterns of racial distribution in the Richmond Metropolitan Area?*

**R2:** *What conclusions do students draw when presented with the combined data on educational outcomes and patterns of racial distribution in the Richmond Metropolitan Area?*

A third research question was not answered during the course of this study due to logistical challenges. The data from R2 and R3 (listed below) could be submitted to Virginia Department of Education committees that are currently evaluating the administration and results of the Standards of learning tests as well as local departments of education and school boards. Stage three of the research is important, therefore a detailed justification and methodology for stage three is provided in this methodology section (additional information is provided in appendix 2) to encourage further work in this area.

**R3:** *Based on the conclusions that students draw from the data, do they perceive the need for action? If so, what action? If not, what reasons do they provide?*

### **Stage One**

R1 was answered using document analysis. By analyzing documents provided by the Virginia Department of Education, Henrico County and Richmond City public schools, as well as from texts, I was able to identify, study, and then synthesize the data to provide an understanding of the current context. By interpreting these facts, I was able to provide explanations of past issues and actions and clarify the collective and educational meanings that may be underlying current practices and

issues. The data collected in this stage of the research was then used to stimulate the dialogue in the focus groups held during stage two.

### *Stage Two*

R2 was answered by meeting with focus groups of 12 students from City of Richmond high schools and 12 from Henrico County. The students were chosen because the divisions in which they attend school reflect the substantial racial, socioeconomic, and educational performance disparities in the Richmond Metropolitan Area. During the meetings, which were held after a typical school day, students met for approximately two hours with the researcher to discuss the results and implications of the document analysis.

The researcher attempted to create a permissive environment in the focus group in order to nurture different perceptions and points of view, without pressuring participants to vote, plan, or reach consensus. Careful, systematic analysis of the discussions provided clues and insights as to how the data is perceived by the students and what conclusions they draw about historical and current contexts. Group members were permitted to influence each other by responding to ideas and comments in the discussion.

During the first hour of the focus group, the researcher (using photocopies of the document analysis) described the data gathered during the document analysis on historic and current patterns of racial distribution and educational outcomes in the Richmond Metropolitan Area. As the data were presented, students were encouraged to respond with statements or questions about the data and to enter into discussion on certain data or relationships between data or data sets. Following the first hour or so of discussion, student participants were allowed a ten minute break.

At the beginning of the second hour of the focus group, students were provided

with an article titled "Area Progress is Leaving Too Many Behind" from the Richmond Times Dispatch; February, 1998 (see appendix one). Students were not able to see the title of the article. During the second hour of discussion, students were encouraged to discuss the statistics they were presented with during the first hour in light of the information they gathered in the newspaper article.

The focus groups were tape recorded and transcribed.

### *Stage Three*

R3 will be investigated during a day-long conference at the University of Richmond where 25 juniors from each high school will interact with one another in dialogue and cooperative research. During the dialogue sessions, students will be led by University of Richmond students in research teams which will focus on developing *proposed solutions/action plans for the issues discussed during the prior discussions* at their respective schools.

In the preface to his 1981 book *Race and Schooling in the City*, Adam Yarmolinsky remembers how during the Boston school busing controversy of the late 1970s, he found himself in a state of "considerable frustration." As a participant in one of the advisory bodies established by the court, Yarmolinsky was close enough to the situation to be aware of the "most obstinate difficulties in the way of progress, but not close enough to do anything about them" ---even he "could figure out what ought to be done." Yarmolinsky concluded that it might be "worthwhile to try an approach that in the past had yielded some modest successes in dealing with problems almost as intractable as this one." The approach called for assembling a small group of people who were already sensitized to the problem, but not "actively embroiled in it," and asking them to try over several day-long meetings to find ways out of existing

dilemmas. Their deliberations would be stimulated by papers prepared for the meetings, and might in turn stimulate new ways of dealing with the problem.

Yarmolinsky's approach to discussing busing in Boston was a major influence on my methodology and how I am choosing to investigate problems educational inequality in the Richmond Metropolitan Area.

A similar youth conference was held (over the course of two days) at Fairfield University in Connecticut to discuss the controversial Sheff v. O'neil law suit in 1994 (see appendix two). The plaintiffs for the Sheff case took legal action against the State of Connecticut on the grounds that the State's educational system was unconstitutional because it failed to provide equal educational opportunities for affluent suburban and inner city students. At the conference, students were divided into ten groups, each of which researched and formulated positions on issues ranging from busing, to white flight, to effective curriculum design for diverse classrooms.

The proposed Richmond conference will be drawn from Yarmolinsky's ideas and follow a similar format to that of the Connecticut program. Designed on a much smaller scale than the Connecticut conference and held on a Saturday in early April, the students involved in the Richmond conference will work cooperatively to find creative solutions for the problems or questions identified in the second phase of the research. The result of this conference will be submitted to committees that evaluate the Standards of Learning Tests, local media, school boards, or other bodies.

#### *Limitations of the Methodology*

The first stage of this research is the most sound. By relying on documents produced and published by the department of education, school divisions, and historical texts, I was able to compare and contrast statistics to be sure that the researchers did not misrepresent the information gathered due to personal or

institutional interests. This stage of the research relied solely on objective data that was not subject to the interpretation of the researcher.

This methodology is limited in the sense that it will not produce results that are generalizable to the majority of students in the Richmond metropolitan area. Only two focus groups are used, which provides a small sample size. These limitations are acceptable, however, because this report is intended as the first step in an exploratory, action oriented process rather than an empirical study.

The perceptions of the students may be different than those of students in other schools in their division, or even other students in their school. Even the most effective focus group cannot assure that each participant feels comfortable voicing his/her opinion and is not overly influenced by other group members. In addition, the comments of the students are subject to the interpretation of the researcher. The researcher may infer meaning or extrapolate ideas from the students' statements that were unintended.

One of the major problems with the focus groups used for this study is that they were not composed of similar students from each school division. In the city, the researcher met with students of mixed ages and sexes. The students in the city ranged from eighth grade to tenth grade and were from several different schools while the students in the county were all high school juniors from the same class in the same school. In the city group, there were three females and nine males while the county group was comprised of ten females and only two males. The county group contained eleven white students and one Asian student. The city group was entirely black.

While the ratio of males to females in each group could have affected the group dynamics and data gathered, the location of the focus groups could have also been a

factor. The focus group with the county students was held in their school with a teacher present. The focus group with the city students was held at the Boys and Girls Club with only a supervisor occasionally present.

The time of the focus groups could be another factor in determining the results. The city focus group was held at six o'clock at night while the county focus group was held at three forty-five ---immediately following the school day.

Another limitation of this methodology was the ability of students to synthesize, comprehend and analyze the data. Much of the data provided is challenging to understand. The article that was used to stimulate discussion was also difficult for the students to comprehend. Although the suburban students were able to discuss the article more thoroughly, the article had to be heavily explicated by the researcher. Of course, this subjects the group members to the interpretation of the researcher and may have affected their comments and subsequent discussion.

Ideally the results of these focus groups, and the data presented in the document analysis can be used to generate hypotheses to stimulate future research on education in Richmond and inform multiracial dialogue across socioeconomic boundaries.



## Presentation of Data

**R1:** *What is the relation between educational outcomes (SOL test scores, etc.) and historical/current patterns of racial distribution in the Richmond Metropolitan Area?*<sup>1</sup>

### *Local Population Trends*<sup>1</sup>

The City of Richmond has declined in population since 1970 while Chesterfield and Henrico Counties have increased. In 1970, Richmond had fifty-two percent of the metropolitan area population base. In 1990, it had thirty-two percent.

<b>Jurisdiction</b>	<b>1970 Total</b>	<b>1980 Total</b>	<b>1990 Total</b>
Chesterfield	76,855	141,372	209,274
Henrico	154,364	180,735	217,881
Richmond	249,621	219, 214	203, 056

Black residents were twenty-six percent of the three jurisdiction's population base in 1970 and twenty-nine percent in 1990. White residents were seventy-four percent of the three jurisdiction's population base in 1970 and sixty-nine percent in 1990.

In each of the three jurisdictions, the percentage of the population that is black increased between 1970 and 1990. In Richmond, the increase was from forty-two percent to fifty-five percent. In Henrico, the increase was from seven percent to twenty percent.

White children were seventy percent of the population under eighteen years of age in 1970 and sixty two percent in 1990. Black children were thirty percent of the population under eighteen in 1970 and thirty five percent in 1990.

In 1970, there were 35,855 white children under the age of eighteen in the city of Richmond (forty-seven percent of total children in the city). In 1990, there were

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<sup>1</sup> Preliminary Data Report: City of Richmond, County of Henrico, County of Chesterfield: Compiled by the Center for Public Policy Virginia Commonwealth University, January 1997.

subsidies while twenty-five percent of students in Henrico received aid in the form of free or reduced lunch.

The percentage of children living in two parent families has declined in both Henrico County and the City of Richmond since 1970 when eighty-seven percent of Henrico children, sixty-six percent of Richmond children lived with two parents. In 1990, just over seventy percent of Henrico children lived in two parent families. During the same year, only thirty-eight percent of Richmond children lived in two parent families.

### *Racial Distribution in Schools<sup>2</sup>*

The number of white students enrolled in Richmond City schools has steadily and significantly declined since the 1954-55 school year while the percentage black of students enrolled has gradually increased. Although the number of students enrolled in the system increased from 1954-1965, reaching a high of 44,363 (1965), the total number of students has gradually declined over the past thirty-five years. Of the 35,857 students enrolled in Richmond schools in 1954, 20,259 were white (56.5%) while 15, 598 were black (43.5%). By 1965, whites made up only 37.4% of the 44,363 students enrolled in the system while blacks made up 62.6 percent of the total students enrolled. In 1975, 8,211 white students made up only 21.5% of the city's 38,218 students while 30,007 black students made up 76.1%. By 1986, there were only 3,726 white students in Richmond public schools ---13% of the 28, 659 enrolled. In 1986 there were 24, 933 black students (87%). (see table one).

In September, 1989 26,900 students were enrolled in Richmond's 59 public schools. 31, 963 students were enrolled in Henrico County's 51 schools in 1989. During the 1997-98 school year, 28,126 students were enrolled in Richmond's 52

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<sup>2</sup> Data provided by Henrico County and City of Richmond Public Schools: Departments of Public Information and Research

# Table One†

## Racial composition of Richmond public schools

School Year	White	Percent	Black	Percent	Total
1950-51	18,037	58.8	12,642	41.2	30,679
1951-52	18,413	58.8	12,915	41.2	31,328
1952-53	19,526	58.9	13,623	41.1	33,149
1953-54	20,052	57.9	14,592	42.1	34,644
1954-55	20,259	56.5	15,598	43.5	35,857
1955-56	19,853	54.7	16,413	45.3	36,266
1956-57	19,522	52.8	17,479	47.2	37,001
1957-58	19,203	50.9	18,530	49.1	37,733
1958-59	19,209	48.9	20,047	51.1	39,256
1959-60	18,518	46.7	21,166	53.3	39,684
1960-61	18,087	44.5	22,599	55.5	40,686
1961-62	17,743	42.7	23,825	57.3	41,568
1962-63	17,641	41.4	24,955	58.6	42,596
1963-64	17,539	40.2	26,092	59.8	43,631
1964-65	16,957	38.3	27,331	61.7	44,288
1965-66	16,571	37.4	27,792	62.6	44,363
1966-67	15,833	35.7	28,529	64.3	44,362
1967-68	14,724	33.7	29,008	66.3	43,732
1968-69	13,624	31.6	29,441	68.4	43,065
1969-70	12,622	29.5	30,097	70.5	42,719
1970-71	17,203*	35.8	30,785	64.2	47,988
1971-72	13,930	30.9	31,101.	69.1	45,031
1972-73	13,078	29.8	30,747	70.2	43,825
1973-74	10,945	26.7	30,015	73.3	40,960
1974-75	9,421	23.9	30,037	76.1	39,458
1975-76	8,211	21.5	30,007	78.5	38,218
1976-77	7,273	19.7	29,693	80.3	36,966
1977-78	6,486	18.3	28,926	81.7	35,412
1978-79	5,842	17.1	28,339	82.9	34,181
1979-80	5,303	16.3	27,274	83.7	32,577
1980-81	4,929	15.6	26,602	84.4	31,531
1981-82	4,224	13.8	26,309	86.2	30,533
1982-83	4,348	14.3	26,001	85.7	30,349
1983-84	4,183	14.0	25,593	86.0	29,776
1984-85	4,022	13.6	25,605	86.4	29,626
1985-86	3,946	13.5	25,214	86.5	29,160
1986-87	3,726	13.0	24,933	87.0	28,659

\*Reflects an increase of 5,000 white students due to Richmond's annexation of twenty-three square miles of Chesterfield County.

public schools. In 1997-98, 39,073 students were enrolled in Henrico County's 54 public schools.

In 1989, Henrico County schools were 70.9 percent white, 25.8 percent black, and 3.3 percent other (other includes Asian, Hispanic, and American Indian for the purpose of this report). In 1989, Richmond city schools were 10.5 percent white, 88.3 percent black, and 1.2 percent other (see table one). At the start of the 1997-98 school year, Henrico County schools were 63.1 percent white, 32.2 percent black, and 4.7 percent other. Richmond City schools were 91.3 percent black, 7.1 percent white, and 1.5 percent other in September, 1997.

### *Educational Outcomes<sup>3</sup>*

In 1988-89, Richmond had a dropout rate of 12.5 percent, while Henrico County had a dropout rate of 3.4 percent. In 1994-95, the dropout rate in Richmond dropped to eight percent while the dropout rate in Henrico County rose to five percent. The State of Virginia's average dropout rate for 1994-95 was also five percent.

Since 1975, average daily school attendance as a percentage of average daily membership has been above the State average in Henrico while it has remained below the State average in Richmond city schools. In 1975, the State average was ninety-three percent, while Henrico County's average was 93.5 percent and Richmond's average was ninety percent. During the 1993-94 school year, Henrico County's daily attendance was up to 95.1 percent while Richmond City's average was 91.3 percent. The State average in 1994-95 was 94.4 percent.

In 1994-95, Henrico County was above the State average of sixty-four percent for the number of students grades 9-12 absent 10 days or less (sixty-nine percent were absent <10 days). Richmond was below the state average (forty-seven percent absent

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<sup>3</sup> Data provided by School Report Cards available on the net at [www.pen.k12.va.us](http://www.pen.k12.va.us) and the Preliminary Data Report: City of Richmond, County of Henrico, County of Chesterfield: Compiled by the Center for Public Policy Virginia Commonwealth University, January 1997.

< 10 days).

In 1994-95, the minority dropout rate in Richmond (eight percent) was above the State dropout rate (seven percent) as well as that of Henrico County (five percent).

Fourth grade student standardized test scores in Richmond have improved since 1991, yet were still below the State norm (1994-95), as well as those of Henrico County. In 1991, eighty-six percent of students in Virginia scored above the twenty fifth percentile on fourth grade standardized tests while only seventy-two percent of Richmond fourth graders scored above the twenty fifth percentile. In 1991, ninety percent of Henrico fourth graders scored above the twenty fifth percentile. In 1994-95, eighty-six percent of Virginia fourth graders scored above the twenty fifth percentile. Ninety-two percent of Henrico and seventy-eight percent of Richmond fourth graders scored above the twenty fifth percentile in 1994-95.

In 1994-95, Richmond was considerably below the State norm in the percentage of students passing the literacy passport tests (sixth grade). Henrico County was slightly above the State norm. Statewide, sixty-six percent of students passed the literacy passport test. In Henrico, seventy percent of students passed. In Richmond, only thirty-six percent of students passed the literacy passport test. In 1990-91 seventy percent of Henrico County students passed the test. The State average was seventy-two percent. In Richmond forty-nine percent of students passed the literacy passport test during 1990-91.

In 1994-95, only fourteen percent of Richmond eighth graders scored above the seventy fifth percentile on eighth grade standardized tests. The State average was thirty-two percent. Thirty-six percent of eighth graders in Henrico county scored above the seventy fifth percentile on eighth grade standardized tests during the 1994-95 school year.

In 1994-95, only twenty-three percent of Richmond eleventh graders scored above the 75th percentile on eleventh grade standardized tests. Forty-one percent of Henrico County eleventh graders scored above the seventy fifth percentile during 1994-95. The State average was thirty-three percent.

Another useful device for investigating educational outcomes and predicting educational attainment of students is the report of graduates collected by each school. This report provides the total number of graduates in a schools division and tells what each graduate (based on a self report) plans on doing after receiving his/her diploma. The report of graduates for Henrico County and Richmond City graduates for 1997-98 is as follows:

<b>Jurisdiction</b>	<b>Two-Year College</b>	<b>Four-Year College</b>	<b>No Plans</b>	<b>Other Plans</b>	<b>Total</b>
Henrico	585	1269	397	100	2351
Richmond	280	473	259	145	1157

The results of the first Standards of Learning Test (which appear on the following page) administration are the most recent standardized test scores that can be used to evaluate disparities in educational outcomes between Henrico County and the City of Richmond. Although many critics dispute the value of the SOL test (specifically their impact on school accreditation), and many educators believe the standards are far too rigorous and remove freedom from teachers who wish to expand their curricula, they still serve as an indicator of disparities among schools. For the purposes of this report, the SOL tests will not be used to measure the merit of individual schools or school divisions, but only as a "measuring stick" that can provide a point of comparison between schools or school divisions.

*The following chart compares the SOL test scores of Richmond City and Henrico County schools*

**Adjusted Pass Rates on Each SOL Test (High School)†**

<b><i>Content Area</i></b>	<b><i>Henrico County</i></b>	<b><i>Richmond</i></b>	<b><i>State</i></b>
Writing	74.7936	58.4158	70.6562
English	73.9648	56.3766	71.5934
Algebra I	34.2135	3.9801	40.0401
Geometry	70.4969	5.5046	51.9191
Algebra II	37.3585	9.1463	30.6606
U.S. History	33.8702	9.7015	30.2016
World History (from 1000 A.D.)	46.4459	13.3409	41.2046
Earth Science	62.2714	24.9600	57.8029
Biology	75.6449	36.7596	72.3924
Chemistry	61.0981	17.5839	54.3220

*†Does not include scores of Limited English Proficient (LEP) students tested*

**R2:** *What conclusions do students draw when presented with the combined data on educational outcomes and patterns of racial distribution in the Richmond Metropolitan Area?*

It is logistically challenging to gain access to high school students for research purposes as an outsider, uninvolved in the day-to-day activities of the school and school system. Some current contextual issues made this task even more difficult. It was not possible to hold multiple focus groups given the challenges of access and time constraints of this study. When students could be accessed for after school activities, I had to rely on contacts in existing school programs rather than forge new relationships. Because many schools were involved in massive efforts to prepare students for the SOL exams, I was not allowed to infringe on teachers' instructional time and had to rely on student volunteers.

The twelve Henrico County participants were from Freeman High School in the West End of Richmond (Henrico County). All of the student participants were juniors who volunteered to work with me on my report. All of the students were from the same class.

During the course of my research, one of the principles of a Richmond high school was fired. As a result, many of the remaining principles were fearful of involving their students with my project. Despite numerous contacts within several Richmond City schools, I was repeatedly denied access. The focus group with inner-city students eventually took place outside of school, at the Boys and Girls club of Richmond. Once again, all of the students participated on a voluntary basis.

In the city, the researcher met with students of mixed ages and sexes. The students in the city ranged from eighth grade to tenth grade and were from several different schools while the students in the county were all high school juniors from the same class in the same school. In the city group, there were three females and nine



males while the county group was comprised of ten females and only two males. The county group contained eleven white students and one Asian student. The city group was entirely black.

#### *Focus Group at Freeman High School*

The twelve high school juniors at Freeman High School were shocked by the historic and current patterns of racial distribution and educational outcomes in Richmond Metropolitan area schools. As statistics were presented, students often said "wow, " and acknowledged that their surprise was due to the fact that they were unaware of the racial disparities in the area, especially the extent to which Richmond city schools were majority black. One student remarked, "I didn't think there were that many [black students in Richmond]." Another student "would have guessed Henrico was slightly higher than thirty-two percent Black." Yet another student commented that he "would have thought there were more whites in Richmond city schools."

As the patterns of racial distribution were presented, one student tried to find ways to disprove the statistics. This student asked: "How many of the white families have kids?" Perhaps he assumed that the small numbers of white children in the city schools might have been due to the fact that few white adults in the city have school age children.

When presented with the drop out rates for each school division, students noted the change in the numbers for city schools and the consistency among the statistics for Henrico County. One student suggested: "maybe Henrico doesn't really have a problem, so they don't need to do anything different."

Students were generally more concerned about the city schools' relation to state averages than they were with comparison to Henrico County schools. One student suggested that they try to determine if the disparities were unique to Richmond

of a State-wide problem. After reviewing the relevant statistics, the student noted that "just about all cities in Virginia are a lot higher than Richmond...except maybe Suffolk, and Petersburg they are all higher than Richmond, even Virginia Beach. Its a regional problem. By and large, counties are higher than the cities, and Richmond is the second lowest of the cities." Students were also interested in knowing if "Chesterfield and Henrico were about the same." When presented with the data on Chesterfield, students said that they assumed Henrico and Chesterfield might be similar.

When asked about standardized test performance in grades k-12, the Freeman students guessed that scores would go down as students got older, and perhaps got involved with friends or other activities that could take away from study time. After viewing the decline in the percentage of students passing standardized tests in Richmond city schools between third and eighth grade, one student asked: "Are there gradual yearly cut backs in spending?" Another student asked: "Is less money being put into schools today than several years ago?"

When presented with the combined SOL test scores for both individual schools as well as their respective school divisions, students had a lot to say. One student immediately remarked, "those math tests were hard." Another commented: "I barely passed and I was in honors algebra." Several students who had not done as well as they liked suggested that their teachers had not taught them all of the information required for the examinations.

As we discussed the SOL test scores, the conversation turned toward the effects of environmental influences on test performance. Students were interested in knowing how many of the parents of Richmond city students were employed. One student noted that "if parents are working, kids might be motivated to work harder." All of the students noted that at least one of their parents was working. Another student

suggested that “unemployment rates might be a factor, but if your parents are working and you never see them, who will make you do your homework.” Another noted that employment might not be as big a factor because “the average person on welfare makes more money than a teacher” because they are provided with more health benefits and support in terms of clothing and food. Another student asked: “If money is not the issue ---with the government supporting the school and all--- is it family life causing decreases in success, the environment? What are the major causes?” One student hypothesized that “if a mother didn’t have high attainment it would be more motivation for the students to do well.”

Much of the conversation also emphasized the role of teachers. Some students suggested that the teachers in the city schools might not be as qualified as those in the counties. Students believed that “a lot of teachers want to come work in the counties.” One student pointed out that test scores might improve if county teachers and city teachers rotated with each other occasionally. One student asked: “What is the motivation for teachers to work in the cities?”

At one point in the conversation, students began to question the role of sports, and involvement in extracurricular activities. One student noted that inner-city schools have trouble holding extra-activities including sports because so many students are ineligible. Commenting on track and field competitions with inner-city schools, one student observed that “we win because we have more people eligible ---even though the people they have may be better or faster, they just can’t get enough participation to win a meet.”

After the first hour of the discussion, students were given an opportunity to read the newspaper article (see appendix 1). Following the reading of the article, the focus of the conversation shifted slightly.

One student commented that “people in counties are frightened of the city, they assume it is all the ghetto. There are still very clear divisions between black and white in Richmond. Another student noted that “we are a highly divided society.” In general, students suggested that the author’s descriptions were accurate but that it is implausible to solve many of the problems. Another student remarked: “I thought it was naive of him [Moeser] to be surprised that kids growing up in the suburbs hadn’t been to Gilpin Court.” Yet another student noted: “As if there was a reason kids living in the west end would go to Gilpin Court.” In the article, Moeser suggests that not all Richmonders in the West End or in inner-city areas have been on Monument Avenue. One student commented that “everyone has been on Monument, at least to get to Willow Lawn [a local shopping area].”

To help stimulate conversation, I suggested that we address some of the questions Moeser asked in the article such as “Are we where we need to be as a region?”

One student asked, “On what level?” Another said: “I guess...I think its a problem that city schools are below the state average, but I guess there are always going to be differences between the counties and the city, it was disturbing that they were below the state average though on almost all of them.” One student commented: “Just looking at the scores I don’t think we are where we need to be as a region, most of the wealth in central Virginia is concentrated in the counties and that wealth is being put into the school system. County school systems can hire teachers give them good salaries and reasonable benefits and that’s where the good teachers are going. That’s why we see our scores dropping ---so if the state wants to even out financial disparities I think we might see higher test scores, rather than threatening schools with losing accreditation status. Let’s put some extra money into the classroom and

figure out how we can get better teachers in the city.” One of this student’s classmates asked: “Will money alone make teachers stay in the city schools?” Another suggested that “its got to be frustrating [teaching in the city], its a different type of kid they are working with.” One student suggested that “there should be some type of compensation in that tougher environment...they [city teachers] are probably getting paid absolutely nothing compared to what the county teachers are making.” A classmate asked: “Why even stay and suffer the frustration when you are getting paid squat and your classroom is falling apart, school’s a wreck, violence is everywhere --- Why do that when you could come out and teach in a good school in the county where everything is happy.”

Following this comment, another student said: “some one said their isn’t or may not be as much violence in city schools as we think, who said that?” Yet another student claimed: “I don’t think violence is the most prevalent thing, but the point is that conditions in city schools are much worse than those in the counties and why should teachers have to put up with that?”

Students were interested in discussing the possible motivations, strengths and weaknesses of city teachers. This led them to begin discussing conditions in schools in the city and in the counties. On student gave her opinion, stating: “I don’t think if you transfer a student to a nicer building, give them computers and stuff ---I don’t think that that will change things that much, change them that drastically.” A classmate agreed, and suggested that “there is a deeper problem than that..”

Still one student claimed that “...nicer facilities help. Giving them a nicer school and better computers even computers at all, giving them supplies that they can work better with. I mean if your sitting there in a desk that’s half broken and half falling apart, scribbled all over you feel bad ---if you have nice surroundings you want to be

there, you are more comfortable, you want to learn and you will do better." One student did not think facilities had a significant impact on educational outcomes, stating: "Its a step up, but its not solving the problem in the least, there are still going to be great disparities between the counties and the city because of the racial divides. But putting more money into city schools would definitely help. It can't hurt." One student countered by suggesting that "What you see makes you feel good about your self and makes you do better ---its a self esteem issue--- look at our classrooms versus those out there, I would rather have class in a nice classroom, it would make me do better."

After discussing whether the conditions of schools impacted educational outcomes, the students began discussing other possible sources of disparities. One student noted, "Its like the issue with crime, do we build more jails or do we get to the root of the problem. Are we just building better schools without really getting to the root of the problem. I don't know." One student asked, "Is it that there is no one there to push them to do better. Is that the problem?" Another student suggested: "Obviously their home life isn't motivating them, so who is left to motivate them ---the teachers. Well, if the teachers aren't motivated to do their jobs how are they going to be able to motivate their students." One student commented: "Its not that teachers don't want to do their jobs ---they can't do their jobs. If you put a Richmond city teacher with a preppy Henrico county teacher, I think there are just two different teaching styles, two different levels of teaching." One student asked, "If you brought an average Richmond city high school teacher to the county, would they be a successful teacher?" One student answered that "they would relate to the students differently." Another suggested that "it depends on how the teachers grew up." A student asked "How can a teacher from a county style upbringing relate to students growing up in the ghetto?" A classmate then suggested that "some teachers might actually prefer teaching in

Richmond but teachers forced to teach in the city might be uncomfortable and therefore not do a good job ---raising the pay, that would be good."

One student was more interested in possible biological or cultural differences between the races and asked:

"Is the root of the problem that blacks have a social ethic that is not as highly developed as the white people? I was discussing this with two very smart black girls who I was in school with and they were noticing that in there honor level classes, they were the only black people in their classes. They said the black kids are all in the "C" level classes, and I'm wondering if its a different mentality. A lot of black kids are in the same school environment as we are yet are not in high level or honors classes. For some reason the work or learning ethic in black families is less strict or strenuous or motivating and for some reason black students by and large aren't succeeding here, so therefore in a less effective school environment they would be even less successful. Less to do with school, more to do with family background or ethnicity. Maybe it could be traced back to civil rights, slavery. They made up their own culture. Kwanzaa, for example. They developed their own culture. They can't claim a cultural heritage."

Following this comment, students became interested in discussing how race may affect educational outcomes. One student asked: "What are the test scores in primarily black parts of Henrico?" Upon reviewing the statistics, the student learned that "they are between the two...their [schools with higher percentages of black students in Henrico] scores are lower than areas and higher than the city's."

One student then asked: "If you put a regular Richmond city and Henrico county student together, do you think it would just be the home setting that would be different?" "No," answered another student, "its friends, after school activities ---if all your friends do homework and then go out to play--- versus whatever kids in Gilpin court do after school, I don't know. I mean there's a difference. So what is the root problem here?" One student remarked: "I would like to see the IQ scores. Test scores reflect so much what the teacher does and don't really show what the student is capable of." One student suggested that there were genetic or biological differences because many people in the counties adopted orphans from Cambodia who then

grew up in wealthy homes ---"most of them went to private schools in the area and lived with wealthy families but not all of them succeeded...some did. Same home environment, yet they didn't all succeed. How can it be the environment?" One student thought that the environment had to play a larger role in affecting student's attainment levels and asked: "How can a student be expected to perform and be motivated to go on to a two or four year college when his/her parents haven't even finished high school. How do you ask for advice? Say you're in college and you ask for help and they say they never made it that far ---that must be pretty hard. Some students are trying to break though, I think that there is this barrier almost. I think they are growing gradually though."

I then began to ask the students how well they thought the schools were preparing them to be future leaders in light of some of the regional problems current Richmond leaders were reportedly facing in the Moeser article. "No, no way are we being prepared," one student noted. "We haven't been submerged into very many diverse situations ." Another commented that "we are not well prepared to deal with diverse groups of people as future leaders." The answer was obvious to one student who noted: "Of course we don't know how to tolerate to different types of people when we have such a homogeneous schools environment...its all pretty much the same --- how would we know how to relate to other groups of people?" One student observed, "we are taught through books, but books don't necessarily tell...it looks one way on paper, but until you actually go out and do it, who knows?" Another student asked the group: "How will we deal with different races or ethnicities, I mean how would we deal with a Muslim who wanted to pray every so often a day, who wants to pray at intervals during class, like a foreigner who may not like America. I just don't think that we ---we have a lot of prejudices even though we don't want to admit them, you can see it in



our conversations because our classes are not very diverse at all and we are willing to be open toward one another. Those prejudices kind of linger there and you can't always see them. When we see more diverse groups, later in life, we will try to cover them up, kind of bury them [prejudices], but they'll still be there."

One student commented: "I think there will be a need for it [regional collaboration] in the future because Richmond claims that it wants to be on the rise in the world and attract all of these new companies to the Richmond area ---other big cities are more socially integrated than ours--- I think we will have to cooperate a little more." Another student commented that a lot of "larger corporations want to hire as lot of minorities." A classmate observed that "they [corporations] only do that if people are paying them to do that ---giving them monetary benefits, they won't do it just to help the racial problem, they will only do it if the government or someone gives them more money to do it. I don't think corporations are going to be that socially oriented, they will just worry about how much money they can make." Another student claimed to have "the cynical viewpoint that companies only seek diversity to make themselves look better."

One student noted: "I think the growing disparities need to be fixed. Just in money terms, we are growing richer, but they're going to bring us down sooner or later, so we're going to have to fix them up too in order to help us be better."

Some students thought that exchange programs between the city and suburbs would be helpful. "Yes," commented one student, "I think a kind of exchange between groups is a help because it helps eliminate biases which are harmful ---it has to be a continuous long-term thing, you can't just go for a week or a weekend and expect anything to change." One student suggested that "there needs to be a communication base on the long term, you may be able to say, 'well they were nice that day,' but you

don't really get to know them."

As nearly all of the students noted, there are many challenges to sustained regional and multiracial dialogue in Richmond. One student observed, "If Richmond is predominately black and Henrico is predominately white and we all are living together in voluntary segregation, how are you going to get to know one another when you live in segregated environments." One student told the group that her mother was a Richmond city teacher and often brought particularly disadvantaged students home with her for the weekend. She remembered that when "we [her mother, herself, and the disadvantaged student] went to Ukrops and stuff everyone would stare at us or look at us funny or make a comment because the student was black. The more we do it [bring the disadvantaged students around with them], the more I realize there is problem."

All of the students agreed that their school cafeteria was a microcosm for segregation in Richmond. One student noted: "In school we have voluntary segregation just like in the city ---black students sit with other blacks and even the ESL [English as a second language] students who can speak English choose not to [sit with us] and sit together." Regarding the ESL students, another student noticed: "They are pretty smart. I have classes with them. But at lunch and stuff they just go together, sitting with people more like them, especially the Vietnamese, they still choose to hang out together rather than assimilate."

Another student remarked: "I think segregation comes about because people want to be around people they have a common ground with and they are like. Its not natural for someone to gravitate toward someone who is completely different form them." One student remembered that in "elementary school, you are given every opportunity to make friends with the black kids, but right away the kids separate

themselves, its an instinct that you go with people you are comfortable with and like.” “Sure,” commented a classmate, “its the same thing, probably comfort is what causes us to segregate ourselves. I think its the same with the black kids but just because they’re raised in different neighborhoods, they listen to different music. Just walking around the school they see that every kid is white, and it makes them happy to see and hang out with the other black kids, I would venture to guess that the black kids all live in the same neighborhoods.” Another student noticed that “the white kids segregate themselves economically. Those who live in the nicer neighborhoods don’t want to hang out with kids from not-so-nice areas---people go out and look for what is more like them.”

When asked to summarize their remarks or any interesting findings, students suggested that the schools are not doing an adequate job exposing them to different types of people. One student noted: “schools are not doing very well [providing students with exposure to diversity], if they do it is on a superficial level----diversity is good, build a bridge to 2000, stuff like that.” All of the students laughed. One student concluded by pointing out that both the Jepson School of Leadership Studies and the Leadership Center at Douglas Freeman High School are predominantly white and hence “leaders are expected to be white.”

### *Boys and Girls Club Focus Group*

Due to problems of access within Richmond City high schools, I had to meet with a group of students from Richmond City schools at the Boys and Girls Club of Richmond. The twelve students that I met with included one eighth grader, four ninth graders, and seven high school sophomores. The students went to Albert Hill Middle School, John F. Kennedy High School, and John Marshall High School. All of the students were participants in a program called the Keystone Youth Leadership

Program, which gave me an excellent opportunity to ask them about any impacts of the patterns of racial distribution and educational outcomes on the development of future leaders.

The students from the Richmond City schools were not surprised by the statistics on patterns of racial distribution and educational outcomes in the Richmond metropolitan area. The students were, however, very interested in where the information came from and noted that they often complied with surveyors who came to *conduct interviews or hand out questionnaires in their neighborhoods*. After reviewing the data on general population trends and patterns of racial distribution in schools, one student remarked, "I think a lot of black folks would move out to the counties too if they had the money...a lot of black families" One student noted that "a teacher got shot at Armstrong high school." Several others commented, "that's right, ever since Armstrong." One student elaborated, stating: "the violence has a lot to do with it, people leaving the schools, they're scared, besides, a lot of kids are in juvenile...when people steal or get in trouble and they get caught, they go to juvenile [detention] and that's where a lot of the kids are anyway, most of the kids are," commented one student.

Although students were not particularly concerned about the impact of racial isolation on individual schools, they were concerned about relations between primarily white and primarily black schools: "Its not a problem within the school, because of course students that are similar are going to flock together. But overall, throughout a whole area, the segregations a problem. When predominantly black schools play ---in competition--- against white schools there is a lot of tension. For example, a basketball game between L.C. Byrd --which is mostly white--- and a Richmond City School turned into a really racial, violent event because students who were in isolated

environment conflicted when they came in contact with each other.” Another student noted that “schools are basically the same or worse than they were back then [before Brown]. Its still segregated and the whites still do better than the blacks. Not that its what most people wanted. Blacks are free, but they are still doing worse on the tests and whites keep the upper hand.”

When presented with the disparities among SOL test scores between the city and county, the students were not at all shocked, and immediately cited poor attendance as the major problem: “See what happens is, we don’t go to school, so we can’t get the test right. We don’t go to school. I go to school, but a lot of other kids don’t.” Another student remarked, “Yeah, attendance. That and lack of paying attention in class [is what causes the lower test scores].” When asked about the disparities in attendance between the counties and the city, the students immediately remarked that the poor policing in the city was the main reason so many students were able to skip school. “The county police will get you if you’re skipping, the city police --- you can walk right past them,” remarked one student. Another student disagreed: “its not that the Henrico County police are smarter, because to me they’re stupid. The other day we walked right past one of them and he just let us go about our business.” Another student suggested that school, itself, was the reason so many students chose to skip, “if school is boring and you aren’t learning anything, no one is going to want to go to school, you’ve got to make it fun.”

One student payed close attention to the drop out rates and suggested: “I think that the reason Richmond’s drop out rate has improved and Henrico’s has gotten worse is because they [Henrico] have old money so they can drop out of school and still have a secure life, the Richmond drop out rate is getting better because more and more people are learning that if you drop out its hard to get a good job, because they

know they will have to go back and get their GED. Henrico rose and Richmond decreased.”

Students also noted the impact teachers had on their test scores. One student commented that “Sometimes teachers don’t really get you to practice enough ---get you prepared. Or, if they do, they get you to prepare way before the test and as the test gets closer they stop helping you practice. It would be better for them to work on it right before the test rather than so far ahead.” Another student noted: “I think some teachers in the public schools really don’t care about us and besides, people out in Henrico have more money than in the City of Richmond so they have computers in their classrooms while we don’t in Richmond. They do have more computers.” Several students acknowledged that money has “A lot to do with it, they [Henrico County] have better text books, they have a lot more money than us, computers and stuff.” One student commented that “our teachers may teach us differently than their teachers teach them. Our teachers may not do as much as theirs do, that’s why they get higher test scores.”

Another student suggested: “In the counties, I think classes are probably more interesting. They have computers, if you have computers, learning is more fun, you will want to learn. County teachers can make it more fun. If its fun, you will want to learn and you will learn. Computers are fun, you will want to work on computers. Nobody likes writing, but typing is fun.” One student pointed out that “they [county schools] have better facilities. They eat in a nice cafeteria, we eat outside on the bleachers.”

Students also recognized the role of the family in affecting educational outcomes. One student noted, “Its the parents’ fault too, well not really their *fault* but some of them can’t really do anything about it [school performance] because they are

just busy trying to support themselves...they've got their own problems." "See, we have the inner-city projects," noted one student, "parents in the projects teach their kids differently ---if you hit me, I'm going to hit you back---they [parents] aren't involved in schools like PTA and all that other stuff. If you bring home good grades, they don't care. Anything after that ---fighting, skipping school--- is on you, and that's the way we feel about it, parents and us don't care as long as they [parents] don't find out about it. So kids are going to do things behind parents' backs --fight, cuss, skip school, smoke, spit, grab you...that's everyday life for most kids. But if you reverse that and take it to a white neighborhood...they're taught... to me they're taught... to be happy, get your education, come home to your upper class house, pastries, and live a happy-go-lucky life because you don't have to worry about food stamps, you don't have to worry about if I'm going to have food in the refrigerator tomorrow. They dwell in a stable house."

Another student suggested that it doesn't matter if a student is white or black, but that "stereotypes tell us how we are supposed to act ---white people this way, blacks this way--- it doesn't matter what race you are, but what type of family you were raised in and what type of morals you have. Just because white people live in Henrico, doesn't mean they couldn't live here and do the same thing ---Jackson Ward, wherever." One student suggested that the family does not play such a vital role: "Even if your parents tell you to go to school, tell you to get an education and be a decent human being, once you walk out that door, its on you. It is your decision to go to school, if you don't want to its your fault. If you don't make it in life, then its your own fault but it is your parents' responsibility to make sure you go to school until you are whatever age to get out of the house. We just think, oh because I'm black, I have to act a certain way and in Henrico they think, oh, because I'm in Henrico and white I have to act a certain way. Its the environment and the morals that affect if the child wants to do

what's right. Kids have to learn on their own. I don't think it has anything to do with black and white. We could all be the same color and some of us would still act the same way."

Indeed, students also noted that their environment was quite different from that of students in the counties. "Its not that city students aren't able to do the work, the point is that we don't want to do the work because we live in the city. We're city black kids. We are black kids in the city. We don't care about school in the state of mind we're in right now. Most kids want to go to school to get an education. Right now we don't feel like going to school to get our education." Another student commented, "yeah, that's the general mentality... its the way people think, its the way you go about it. See me, personally, I don't like school, but I go anyway cause I got to. That's the only way I am going to be able to do ---I mean, yeah, have to--- that's the only way I'm going to excel myself. " "County students live in the county and are surrounded by predominantly white kids, so they are comfortable and they do better they are surrounded by their peers. But if you take them and bring them to the city and take us to the county, you will see a whole different situation." Another student agreed: "Yes, its your environment. See, we have too many distractions. They've got better facilities --like bathrooms... seriously. " If you adjust to a certain environment, then that's what you are going to live by. If you're in a county school, then that's what's around you so you excel. Here we have drugs ---not that we all get caught up in drugs--- but if you have that around you, how can you change what you do every day? If you are exposed to the same type of stuff day-in and day-out for years, then that's what you're going to keep doing. In county schools, they do what they do and we do what we do." One student suggested that "drugs are everywhere, killing is everywhere, they have the same things as us...drugs are everywhere, its a personal choice. It could be an all



black place or an all white place ---drugs are there.” But another student commented that city students “have a lot more to worry about, like a budget ---in the counties, kids have a lot more money and so they don’t have to worry about the same stuff as us.”

The students were interested in discussing how the current education system might impact current or future leaders. “We have mostly black people[in our schools], but we do have other different types ---white, Chinese people. But people choose to associate with different types of people so even if you don’t have all types of friends, it doesn’t mean that you can’t be a mayor or the president. You have to have a separate life where you prepare for that stuff [leadership]. In our schools, we have things to help us select a career and develop more leadership. In my school, we have career help to point us in the direction where we want to go...so just because you don’t have all types of friends doesn’t mean that you can’t be in a high class job.” “Hey, we’ve got a white mayor now,” one student remarked. “I think if a student who is in an all white school and a student who is in an all black school have to work together it will be difficult. Look at the bus lines, I heard that people in the counties didn’t want people in the cities to come out there [the counties] because the black folk ---you know how they are-- would take all the jobs and disturb the peace or something. Its ignorant. How can they work together? It harms the community.”

Another student suggested that a major leadership challenge was “race beef.” “Blacks’ and whites’ is the most known beef among races out of everybody --- everybody knows what happened back in the day [slavery]--- that’s what is keeping black and white folks from working together. We don’t need that, its stress ---beef creates stress. Whites and blacks cannot consult with one another.”

As the discussion progressed, and we began to address some of the questions raised in the article, we discussed whether or not the disparities among educational

outcomes were, in fact, a regional problem. One student suggested, "its just lack of work, laziness and ignorance." Another noted: "They [people in the county] should help us because they are doing better than us." Yet another student commented: "I think we need to help ourselves ---everybody is looking for a handout. If they have been trying and they haven't done anything by now, what makes us think they will do anything to help us in the future ---but we do need help."

One student speculated on the origin of the racial isolation and disparities among educational outcomes: "It all comes down to white racism... when blacks could go to a white school, whites left the city and blacks moved in." "Most white families are migrating to Henrico because most of the Richmond schools have a bad reputation --- they are known for violence. The white community is just trying to get into the best learning environment," commented another student.

One student suggested that the racial disparities were not a problem: "No racial disparities are not a problem, I like to be around my peers. You choose what school to go to." But another student had a different point of view, "I think I feel more comfortable with the whites in school because I know I would get more work done." The eighth grader commented: "I think its a problem in school because black people are worried about how they dress and white people don't worry about that stuff."

Toward the end of the discussion, some of the students began to offer solutions to some of the problems in the inner-city schools. One commented, "Most people on school board are white and they ---are on the city of Richmond school board--- and they send their kids to Henrico, how does that make me feel? What would change things is if these people put their kids back in the Richmond City public schools. I think the people in Bon Air and Windsor farms, they should help us out, give back to the city of Richmond because they've got a whole lot of money to use."

Students could understand why whites and some blacks chose to send their kids to the county schools, "The Whites go on what they hear about Richmond schools and they try to send their kids to where they will get the best education. If you go to Henrico and Richmond schools, where would you send your kids? Look at the schools, what do people have to base their decisions on?"

At one point in the conversation, I asked the students if they would send their kids to city schools. The response was mixed. One student said that he would send his kids to the city schools "because they will want to be around their friends, but if he started doing like I did in school ---mediocre--- then I would start sending him to a better school."

"If I lived in the city, I would send my kids to the city school. If I wanted the best education, I would send them to the counties, but if I was living in the city, I would try to send them to city schools." Another student suggested: "All you have to do is stay on your kid about his grades and he can succeed in any school." But his classmate disagreed: "If a teacher spends ninety percent of her time disciplining other kids in the classroom and can't spend that time on teaching me, I need to have to set up some kind of after school or extra programs...but the tests will still come....I'm sure they'll [teachers] do it, but it might not help on the SOL tests." According to the students, city teachers had a challenging time teaching due to discipline problems: "I had a teacher that set up an after school class to teach the same stuff that we were supposed to be learning during the day because we had a lot of bad kids in the class and she spent her time disciplining."

In conclusion, one student remarked: "I don't like school, but I go to school because I want to be a millionaire like Bill Gates, so I work at school ---I think everyone should strive to be a millionaire---70 years old and travel as much as I can." Another

concluded that “students just have too much to worry about in Richmond city schools.”

## Interpretation of Data

Celebration of the twentieth anniversary of *Brown v. Board of Education* was marred by the Supreme courts decision in *Milliken v. Bradley*. In the first defeat for desegregation since *Brown*, the Supreme Court ruled that a metropolitan desegregation plan merging Detroit's inner-city schools with fifty-three suburban school districts could not be constitutionally justified. The court reasoned that since the counties had not created Detroit's segregation problem, they could not be part of the solution. The seed for white suburbia was planted ---the court would not shut off the remaining exit for those whites who wished to avoid desegregation with blacks. Henry L. Marsh III, attorney for the plaintiffs in *Bradley v. Richmond* (a similar case involving Richmond) stated:

The opposition, by resisting and fighting, delayed school desegregation for such a long period of time that although we won some key battles we might have lost the war. If desegregation had occurred at once, as we tried to get it to happen, I think we would have retained more whites in the system. By stretching it [desegregation] out over such a long period of time, it enabled whites to leave the system and to gradually move to the counties and get into private schools. The slow pace at which the courts granted us relief permitted our opponents to achieve many of their objectives.

When the Supreme Court outlawed "separate but equal" in 1954, black Americans had reason to believe that the end of legalized segregation was near. Despite ominous predictions of prolonged resistance, even the most pessimistic observers would not have believed that twenty, or even fifty years later, school segregation would still be a reality. Yet, by the mid 1970s, the resegregation of Richmond's public schools was well under way. Since the 1970-71 school year, roughly 12,000 white pupils have abandoned the city's schools. In the following years, Richmond's Black enrollment continued to climb, reaching 87 percent in the 1986-87 school year and over ninety percent by 1996-7. And, as in *Milliken*, the Supreme Court in Richmond's metropolitan consolidation case had failed to take into

account the extent to which local and state governments have hindered school desegregation by promoting housing segregation, an issue that seemed beyond the reach of the law (Pratt, 1992).

Events of the 1970s necessitated a serious restructuring of the curriculum in Richmond's public schools, one that could not be accomplished by new busing plans or school mergers. When whites left the city during the 1970s, they took much of the middle-class tax base with them. The attendant loss of revenue contributed to a general decline in educational standards and ultimately caused many affluent Blacks to withdraw their support for Richmond's public schools (Pratt, 1992). Enrollment figures indicated that the number of blacks attending Richmond's schools had been declining since the mid-1970s, while at the same time the number of Blacks attending county schools, both of which had black enrollments of less than ten percent in 1971, were twenty-six and fourteen percent Black respectively, according to 1987-88 enrollment figures. While the resegregation of the city's schools was certainly racially motivated to a large extent, "discernible class divisions were becoming readily apparent" (Pratt, 1992).

As new socioeconomic realignment was taking place in the 1970s, educational standards in the city's schools were declining at an alarming rate. In almost every category, Richmond's public schools were worse off each succeeding year than they had been the year before, something which, to a degree, was expected (Pratt, 1992). "It came as little surprise to me that the quality of education took a turn for the worse in the early 1970s," said superintendent Richard Hunter. "Some decline in academic standards was inevitable during the early years of desegregation. Education was bound to suffer some setbacks because the schools had served as the major battlegrounds for the desegregation issue. It was a sacrifice that had to be made."

(Pratt, 1992, p. 91)

Beginning in the late 1970s, however, school officials agreed that certain curriculum revisions were necessary if educational standards were to improve. Because most of the children were now coming from lower-income families, the teachers had to take a different approach in educating them. But more importantly, school officials were forced to recognize ---and accept--- the fact that it would not be as easy to educate children from poor families as it had been educating those from more affluent ones.

The curriculum revisions (such as a renewed emphasis on the basics, smaller pupil-to-teacher ratios, more teacher incentives, and an array of special programs) have obviously paid some dividends ---Richmond public schools have certainly improved in the past ten years. Yet, in terms of overall performance, Richmond's students still score lower than their suburban counterparts, and the gap has not narrowed appreciably in recent years. Indeed, recent SOL test scores and other indicators of educational outcomes clearly display the extent to which disparities exist between Richmond's city and county schools.

When compared with historical patterns of racial distribution in schools, current data suggests that schools in Richmond are still becoming more racially isolated. In the past ten years alone, the percentage of Black students in Richmond city schools has increased significantly. The data suggests that whites living in the city of Richmond have largely abandoned public education. In addition, the increasing poverty in Richmond's City schools coupled with the increased number of minority students (and families) in the counties suggests that middle class blacks are also leaving the city and its schools. While in the past Richmond schools deteriorated because of a shrinking tax base caused by "white flight," today's poor educational

outcomes may be the result of middle class blacks leaving Richmond.

While the percentages of minority students in Henrico County schools has increased over the past ten years, the average test scores for the county have remained relatively consistent. Similarly, while the number of white students in Richmond city schools has decreased, scores in the city have remained relatively stagnant or, in some cases, increased. This data suggests that educational outcomes are not largely determined by race. As the disparities among educational outcomes have increased, however, income polarization has been evident in the Richmond metropolitan area. This data suggests that concentrations of poverty ---as determined by free and reduced lunch subsidies and census tracts--- are a better indicator of standardized test scores than patterns of racial distribution. There also seems to be a correlation between concentrations of poverty and other educational outcomes such as drop out rates and average daily attendance. Undoubtably, there is a significant correlation between higher levels of poverty in Richmond metropolitan schools and a host of other problems including higher drop out rates, poorer school attendance, and lower standardized test scores.

The data clearly illustrates the massive disparities between urban and suburban schools in the Richmond metropolitan area. From the data, one can certainly conclude that 1). schools in the Richmond metropolitan area are, in large part, racially segregated, 2). schools with high concentrations of poverty have higher percentages of black students, 3). city schools tend to have higher concentrations of poverty, 4). city schools have lower standardized test scores, lower rates of attendance, and higher drop out rates. Based on these data, one can conclude that in the Richmond metropolitan area, a majority white school is inevitably a better performing school than a majority black school. Separate but equal is alive in well in



Richmond.

The results of the focus group with Freeman High School students were disturbing. Although students were aware that the city schools had higher percentages of black students and the counties were mostly white, they were unaware of the extent to which racial isolation existed. Perhaps even more disturbing is that the students were largely unaware of the historical and cultural contexts that led to the current patterns of racial distribution. The students believed that the voluntary patterns of racial distribution that they saw in their school cafeteria, for example, must explain the patterns of racial distribution for residential housing and schools. Perhaps most shocking were student comments that suggested there were biological or inherent cultural differences between students in predominantly white and predominantly black schools. While the facts showed that Richmond policy makers have routinely and systemically limited the opportunities for minorities, the white students in Henrico often found it difficult to comprehend the extent to which discriminatory practices exist or existed in the area.

The students in the focus group at the Boys and Girls Club were more aware of the disparities that existed between the schools in the City of Richmond and Henrico County. However, because they often saw what they characterized as "lazy attitudes" and "goofing-off" among their classmates, the city students were hesitant to cite external forces as creating the disparities among educational outcomes and uneven patterns of racial distribution. Whereas the suburban students believed the segregation that exists in the city was mostly voluntary, the urban students were better able to link the current patterns of racial distribution and educational outcomes to a greater historical and cultural context. Nonetheless, the city students did not acknowledge the impact of larger societal forces on their educational outcomes, but

rather looked for more local influences such as poor quality of instruction, skipping school, or not taking classes seriously. The most shocking comments in the inner-city focus groups came from students who suggested that their culture ---the black culture of the projects--- was in some part responsible for poor standardized test scores and disappointing educational outcomes in the city. One student suggested that the inner-city students performed poorly in school because "in the projects" they were raised to have low expectations for academic performance. In a sense, the inner-city students' observations about their environment and peers represented what might be thought of as traditional stereotypes about individuals (specifically minorities) in housing projects ---namely that they are lazy and suffer due to their own actions.

In general, the urban students appeared to have had more experience with the suburban schools or areas than the suburban students had with the inner-city schools and neighborhoods. Although the media could have influenced the inner-city students' perceptions ---television is saturated with middle class white families--- their accurate depictions of life in the suburbs suggests that they have, at least seen, suburban parts of Henrico County. In contrast, the Freeman students' descriptions of "life in the projects," or "the ghetto" (as they frequently referred to it) were more vague and suggested a higher degree of uncertainty or unfamiliarity.

Both groups of students identified extreme differences in the facilities provided for inner-city and suburban students as having a major influence on educational outcomes. Several of the suburban students suggested that the educational outcomes indicated that the inner-city students might not have adequate access to computers. Indeed, the inner-city students confirmed that they rarely had computer time integrated into their course work ---yet if they did, they thought their learning would be enhanced greatly. As one inner-city student noted: "nobody likes to write,

but typing is fun...math on a computer, I'll do that." Several of the Freeman students believed that the poor facilities in the city schools could have a negative impact on students' self esteem and educational outcomes. Indeed, several of the city students remarked that *they might feel better and achieve higher standards if they were around higher performing peers in better facilities.*

Both groups of students perceived Richmond to be a highly divided society. Only the city students discussed racial tensions between students from primarily white and primarily black schools. The suburban students did not discuss racial tensions, presumably because they had not had adequate experience with people of different races, cultures, or socioeconomic backgrounds. Both the inner-city and suburban students thought that regional cooperation would be necessary in the future and could help to decrease the gaps in educational performance. The Henrico students noted that without regional cooperation, the poorer performing inner-city population would eventually begin to bring down those who achieved higher standards in the counties. The city students felt that because the county's citizens had more money and were achieving at higher levels, that they ought to help the inner-city schools to improve. Despite the desire to be helped, many of the inner-city students were *cautious about sounding as though they wanted "hand outs" or extra help because they feared being characterized as lazy.*

The suburban students did not suggest that whites moving back to the city and attending city schools would help eliminate disparities. The inner-city students, however, were very aware that whites ---even those on the school board--- had abandoned public education in Richmond and suggested that if middle class whites would begin to support the city schools, they would gradually improve. Presumably, because students were largely unaware of the impact "white" and middle class black

"flight" has historically had on the inner-city school system, they did not consider a white or middle class movement back to the cities as a potential solution.

Both the inner-city students and suburban students had varying opinions about why the test scores might be so different. The suburban students suggested that the inner-city teaching might not be as good as the instruction provided in the county schools. The inner-city students also discussed their belief that some teachers did not care about them because they were inner-city public school students. Some of the city students suggested that there were higher quality teachers in the suburbs. Both groups of students emphasized how challenging it must be to teach in an inner-city class room. While the suburban students thought low pay, violence, and poor facilities would present challenges for inner-city teachers, the inner-city students noted that their classrooms had a high level of discipline problems and that some teachers had to spend the majority of instructional time disciplining poorly behaved students. Although the suburban students suggested that poverty, hunger, a poor home environment, drugs, or violence could affect students behavior in class, the inner-city students tended to believe that behavior problems were the result of immaturity or simply poor manners.

The focus groups confirmed that students in the Richmond Metropolitan area have very little exposure to students of different socioeconomic backgrounds or races. Both groups acknowledged that they had little or no contact with students from different socioeconomic standing during the course of the school day. In light of the need for regional cooperation in the Richmond Metropolitan Area, as discussed in the Moeser article, the majority of the students claimed that public schools in the area are not doing an adequate job of preparing future leaders for a multiracial democratic society. The suburban students did not believe they would be able to work effectively with

people from different backgrounds. Although the inner-city students believed that they had had more exposure to diversity and could work with different types of people, they were concerned that the racial or other stereotypes of students in the counties could be detrimental to future relations. Repeatedly, the inner-city students claimed to know exactly how the white suburbanites viewed them, imagining them saying: "Oh, we know how those black folks are."

The stereotypes that the county and inner-city students had about one another were largely confirmed in the focus groups. The suburban students claimed that they had no business in the inner-city areas and believed the "ghettos" were unsafe and violent places where students had poor work ethics and were distracted by drugs, violence, hunger, and other problems on a daily basis. The suburban students also predicted that the disparities among educational outcomes might be due to the fact that many of the inner-city students did not have educated or supportive parents. Some students suggested that the parents were having so much trouble keeping their own lives together that it would be difficult to encourage their children to do well in school. The inner-city students acknowledged that it would be strange for suburban students to come to their neighborhoods, and in most cases, acknowledged that drugs, violence, and poor home lives did, in fact, cause many students to "have too much to worry about."

Similarly, the inner-city students believed that most of the students in the suburbs had happy home lives and parents who encouraged them to do well in school by actively engaging them in discussion and participating in school activities. The suburban students described how their own happy home lives allowed them to concentrate on their school work. They described supportive parents who encouraged them by actively participating in their education and expecting them to excel

academically. Just as the suburban students' stereotypes of the inner-city youth were confirmed by the inner-city focus group, many of the inner-city students' predictions about the lives of their suburban counterparts also were proven accurate.

Although the students in the City of Richmond and those in Henrico county have lived very different lives and foster numerous stereotypes (some true, some untrue) about one another, they are both excited about the prospect of meeting with one another to discuss regional issues facing the Richmond Metropolitan Area. Both groups of students perceive problems with current disparities and are willing to work to find solutions that might improve educational outcomes and stimulate regional cooperation in the future. Indeed, the racial and socioeconomic isolation in Richmond has, to some extent, helped shape the ideas and perceptions of public school students. As students of leadership studies, both groups acknowledged the need for future leaders to work effectively with diverse groups of stakeholders ---across racial and socioeconomic boundaries--- to solve common problems. Unfortunately, both groups of students recognized that current educational practices in Richmond, influenced by historic and current patterns of racial distribution, prevented opportunities for this type of interaction.

## **Conclusions and Recommendations for the Future**

Public education in the Richmond Metropolitan Area is separate and unequal. There appears to be little or no contact among students from different socioeconomic backgrounds and races among the area's high schools. Following the *Brown* decision in 1954, middle class whites began to abandon the public education system in the City of Richmond. Due to a shrinking tax base and lack of community support, educational standards in Richmond's city schools have continued to decline. The poor quality of Richmond's schools has influenced many middle class black families to abandon the public education system and send their children to private schools or move to the counties. Indeed, the historical and cultural context of segregationist and racist policies in the Richmond Metropolitan Area continues to have a substantial impact on educational outcomes today.

The issue in this report is the failure of the Richmond Metropolitan Area to deal with intensifying segregation and educational inequality between its county and city schools as is evidenced by current patterns of racial distribution and educational outcomes. Since they are rapidly increasing, however, simply letting existing patterns and practices run will tend to make them much worse. If the trends continue, the area may face a very difficult choice between deep division and inequality and very difficult mandatory changes.

The crucial first steps are admitting the problem, discussing positive solutions for growing school and housing patterns of racial isolation, and putting them into action before the existing trends produce much deeper divisions as they certainly will in decades to come if left unchecked.

This report should serve as a catalyst for future dialogue among students across racial and socioeconomic boundaries in the Richmond area. When presented with a

common data set, Richmond area students from dramatically different backgrounds were able to recognize common problems and cited some similar causes. A common ground exists for future interaction.

Exploring answers to research question three, a process which could be completed during a one or two day youth conference (see appendix two), would be an important next step in breaking down stereotypes among students and creating a sustained dialogue on the issues. In addition, the results of such a conference could provide important information to committees of the Department of Education that evaluate the results of the Standards of Learning examinations and other indicators of educational performance. In the future, more thorough data on Richmond area schools should be gathered and presented to students from high schools throughout the region. The reactions of students should be thoroughly documented and used to inform and stimulate activities at a Richmond area youth conference.

Leaders in the Richmond metropolitan area ---and throughout the world--- are learning that society's increasingly complex problems require thoughtful and efficient collaboration among diverse stakeholders to find effective solutions. Undoubtably, the leaders of the future will face even more difficult challenges. Individual behavior is influenced and reinforced by community and environment. Schools play a major role in shaping the values and standards of communities.

To sustain economic and moral vitality in the United States and the global community, we must ensure that our schools achieve high levels of excellence while influencing and reinforcing the democratic values of participation and civic responsibility. Separate and unequal schools cannot accomplish this goal. By acknowledging the impact of historical and cultural contexts on current issues, recognizing problems, and working cooperatively toward amicable solutions, future



leaders will have the tools they need to maintain an effective, efficient, and equitable education system in America and address the challenges of the next century.

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## REGIONAL OUTLOOK

# Area Progress Is Leaving The Many Behind

**A**re we making any progress in the area of regional cooperation? The answer to the question depends largely on two considerations: context and perspective.

First, the context. Where we are today can be best determined by remembering where we were yesterday. Today, we don't have the terribly destructive interjurisdictional wars that were practically destroying the metropolitan area during the 1960s and 1970s. The 1970 annexation by Richmond of 23 square miles from Chesterfield reverberated throughout the region — indeed, throughout the state — for many years afterward. In fact, it was the Richmond-Chesterfield annexation that contributed in a significant way to the drama in the state legislature that ultimately led to the annexation immunity laws and the statewide moratorium on city-initiated annexations.

The conflict over the 1970 boundary expansion was bad enough, but it was worsened by the terribly destructive racial divisions that affected the entire region. The annexation itself was a major setback to racial accord. As the U.S. Supreme Court later noted in a unanimous decision, the annexation was more about protecting a white political base than it was about land use and economics. Added to the annexation case were the school desegregation decisions, particularly the decision of the Federal District Court that called for the consolidation of the city schools with those of Chesterfield and Henrico. The reaction to that decision was unforgettable for those of us who were around during those days. Judge Robert Machige's life was threatened, and federal marshals ringed his house. The public antipathy toward the decision was further evidence of a metropolis deeply polarized over issues related to public schools and race.



JOHN V. MOESER

## A Less Intense Racial Standoff

Compared to then, we've come a long way. Today, we no longer have the kind of racial standoff that typified the early '70s. I didn't say that race has ceased to affect our common life. We all know that it hasn't, but what I suggest is that racial polarization is not nearly what it used to be. White leaders in the metropolitan area no longer use regionalism as a cover to perpetuate their hold on political power. That's quite a contrast to what often occurred in the recent past when so-called metropolitan reform, such as city-county consolidation was little more than a ruse for reversing the growth of African-American populations in the central city. The merger of Warwick and Newport News was such a case.

Race also played a role in the attempted merger of Henrico County and Richmond in 1961. Given the tragic history of how white supremacy often drove metropolitan reform, it is understandable why for many years many African-American leaders were wary of regional reform and opposed it vigorously. Today, however, the suspicions have lessened. African-American leaders today work shoulder to shoulder with their white counterparts on any number of regional initiatives.

But are we where we need to be today as a region? I said earlier that whether or not we're making progress on the regional front has to do with context and perspective.

By one perspective, we've done quite well. All one has to do is to review the 1996 report of the legislative joint subcommittee that was convened to study the delivery of governmental services in the Greater Richmond Area. The report records the various types of cooperative effort currently in existence. The list is impressive; namely, 120 efforts in the areas of economic development and tourism, education, extension services,

fire and emergency, health/mental health, jails and detention, law enforcement, administration and management, planning and land use, recreation, social services, solid waste management, transportation, and utilities. The methods for achieving this cooperation include informal agreements, formal agreements, and authorities.

From one perspective, this arrangement is working fine and has the potential of accomplishing much more. One of the most promising ventures is the Community Collaborative for Youth sponsored by the Greater Richmond Chamber of Commerce, which, with the aid of a major planning grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, is developing a regional, comprehensive approach to youth-related issues. The big question, however, is whether collaboration alone will be enough to improve the lives of children, particularly those living in poverty, without also surmounting the institutional barriers that keep the metropolis divided.

## Some Collaboration Works

Our current approach to regionalism amounts to one local government developing agreements, when it is convenient to do so, with another government. At the international level, agreements such as this are called "treaties." Both treaties and agreements are fashioned only when it is in the self-interest of nation-states or local governments to do so.

In Central Virginia, those who benefit most from this arrangement are generally those who have good jobs, whose children are well-clothed and healthy, and whose family is secure from violent crime. Our system of inter-local cooperation allows large numbers of well-off citizens to live in self-sufficient enclaves situated miles beyond the city. Their lives seldom, if ever, impinge on life in the central city. At VCU, I am coordinating a new course called "Discover Richmond" that is designed to introduce first-year students to the city and its suburbs.

■ John V. Moeser, a professor in urban studies and planning at VCU, delivered this address to the Fifth Annual State of the Metro Dinner, sponsored by the League of Women Voters of the Richmond Metropolitan Area, last fall.

Some of the students who graduated from high schools in the Richmond-Petersburg suburbs, and who have lived here for at least seven years, indicated in a class survey that, until this course, they had never seen Monument Avenue or been to MCV, Jackson Ward, or Gilpin Court.

### For Some, the System Fails

Whether inter-local cooperation works is a matter of perspective. From the perspective of those citizens who are the most vulnerable of our society, those without jobs or jobs that don't pay enough adequately to support a family, who don't own a car and are forced to pay for their own health care or go without, for those who can't sleep at night because of the sound of gunfire, or, worse, whose lives have been torn apart because of the violent death of a loved one — from the perspective of those who would like to move to a safer place, but can't afford to purchase a house because minimum lot sizes shut them out, the system is not working well at all.

If all of these regional agreements are working, then why is it that the central city is becoming more isolated — land-locked; unable to acquire land for new development; and experiencing, on one hand, a loss of jobs and middle-class families, black and white families alike; and, on the other hand, a growing concentration of poverty? If these agreements are working, then why are the inner suburbs beginning to decline and the counties registering a larger percentage increase in social-service case-loads than the city itself? If these agreements are working, then why do we still have the spatial mismatch between the places where jobs are exploding and the places where the jobless live? If these agreements are working, then why does our land-use planning still lead to low-density, auto-dependent sprawl that requires expensive expansion of infrastructure, destroys the natural environment, and leads to gridlock traffic? If these

agreements are working, then why does one locality reap the windfall of a large commercial enterprise while the adjoining locality assumes the costs of educating the children?

I maintain that, in the long run, the greatness of our metropolitan area will not be measured by the skyline of downtown or edge city, or the number of subdivisions we've developed, or the number of new hotels or airports we've constructed. We won't be judged by the scope of our information-age technology or the number of inter-local agreements we've fashioned. In the grand scheme of things, our greatness will be measured by the way we as a people responded to those with the greatest needs.

### Commitment to Public Good

I also maintain that how history will judge the greatness of metropolitan leadership will have little to do with election victories or business expansions. Great leaders will be men and women guided by moral imperative rather than political expedience; people so committed to the public good that they placed at risk their own self-interest and faced the onslaughts of those who preferred the comfortable and the routine.

Great leaders will be those who united people otherwise divided and who appealed to our best instincts, not our worst. Greatness will be bestowed on those who were honest enough to say that we could do better, courageous enough to have done something about it, democratic enough to have trusted the wisdom of citizens and enlisted the efforts of all of us, and compassionate enough to have embraced those whom others had abandoned. Therein lies greatness. Therein lies what it will take to build a great metropolis full of life and promise where people of every color, race, and social circumstance live well and together.

## Appendix II

*Below is a sample for a letter that could be used for facilitators at a youth conference bringing together students from schools throughout the Richmond Metropolitan Area. Included is a potential schedule of events and a list of possible topics for the students to research.<sup>1</sup>*

Dear ?,

Thank you for agreeing to be part of our student conference Border Crossing: Connecting the Two Richmonds. At this point we thought it would be nice to tell you what you have in store for yourself.

We have divided all of the students from ? high schools into ten groups, and you have been placed in a group as well. Ideally, the students should be able to research and formulate a position based on their research, but we all know they cannot. That is where you come in.

The facilitator assigned to each group will have to help the students in the library, guide them through the research, and, most importantly, help them during their discussions of the issue leading up to their resolution. They may be frustrated by the process, they may get annoyed with each other, and they may have strong feelings on what is right and wrong during the discussions. There are only ? students in each group, but they are total strangers who will need to work together well for two days in order to accomplish their goal. You will probably have to work harder at this conference than you would in your normal day in school, but without your commitment to making this conference a success, little will get accomplished.

The first step, I think, is to understand the purpose of the conference itself. We want students to be part of the discussion about racial distribution and educational outcomes, but we know that the issue is very complex and sometimes emotional. Therefore, the students at this conference must create recommendations for changing Richmond Metropolitan schools based on their research as well as their own experiences. Their recommendations will go to the state dept. of ed. or other ?... Our students will become part of the planning process for improving Richmond's schools.

In order to help you, we have tried to give some ideas for manageable goals for

<sup>1</sup> Special Thanks to Roz Mcarthy (who ran a similar conference in Connecticut) for her help on this section



each section of the conference. These are suggestions, but they sound reasonable to us:

Tuesday, March 15

9am - 11 am - Welcome and keynote speaker

11am - noon - Committees in classroom.

**GOAL: TO SET RESEARCH GOALS WITHIN THE GROUP**

During this session, the facilitators will first lead the group in some short get acquainted activity. Then they will lead a discussion which focuses first, on analyzing the question that your group will research; second, asking what the group members already know about their topic; third, deciding what they need to know and what questions they must answer; and finally, discussing where they can find those answers.

**LUNCH**

1pm - 2:30 pm - Research (these times are approximate. The break will be floating. You and the students might discuss this)

**GOAL: TO BRING INFORMATION, DATA, BACKGROUND MATERIAL, IDEAS BACK TO THE GROUP SO A RESPONSIBLE RESOLUTION CAN BE DRAFTED**

During this session, the students will need the most help. The following options can be considered:

- 🍏 two students should definitely go to the library to be trained to use the ERIC search for educational documents;
- 🍏 students could check the computerized library index for books
- 🍏 students could check the on-line Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature
- 🍏 students could check the on-line NY Times Index
- 🍏 students could read extra materials given to groups upon arrival,
- 🍏 students could check pamphlets on specific issues
- 🍏 students could check bibliographies at the end of articles already given out or the bibliography given at the conference

It will be helpful to divide your group up with specific jobs. They should be urged to find articles, read them, take notes with bibliographic material, and keep searching.

Each group will be given a \$10 Xerox card, but we ask that as little as possible get xeroxed.

Each group will also be given a spot in the library to call its own. You can have a central place for meeting, talking and sharing information.

3 pm - 5:30 pm - Research and Discussion

## GOAL: REACH A TENTATIVE CONCLUSION ON WHAT THE RESEARCH SHOWS

You'll have to improvise a bit here. You'll probably need to spend some time in the library, but you might want to meet with your group to assess what they have already found out and to see what else they need.

You'll want to discuss the topic, trying to reach some conclusion about what the research showed.

5:30 pm - 8:30 pm - Dinner and Dance/Social?

Wednesday, March 16

9 am - 10 am - Different Perspectives Panel

10 am - noon

## GOAL: TO GET YOUR RESOLUTION DRAFTED

The resolution should be reached by consensus, rather than by a simple majority vote. However, if you really can't achieve consensus, of course you may have a dissenting opinion in your report. The resolutions should make specific recommendation(s), but should be presented within a brief report on the important factors your group grappled with.

12 pm - 1 pm - Lunch

1 pm - 3 pm - General Assembly

## GOAL: TO HEAR ALL OF THE RESOLUTIONS AND VOTE

Each resolution will be presented with its brief report within 5 minutes. The assembly will then break up into groups BY SCHOOL and discuss the proposals there.

Afterward, a vote will be taken. Each delegate will have one vote.

With committed facilitators/students and eager students, we can make this a success.

I'll be trying to give you as much information as we can. I've been collecting and xeroxing things to help you, so don't despair.

Please, if you have questions or ideas to make this work, we'd be really happy to have your input.

Thanks again for agreeing to be part of this,

Jepson School of Leadership Studies Student(s)

The following ten issues will be researched during the conference. Each student facilitator has been assigned to a multi-school group which will research one of these issues:

1. Based on what research shows about the impact of school integration on educational achievement, identify regional goals for increasing student achievement and solving the problem of racial isolation.
2. Based on what research shows about the relationship of family status (socioeconomic level, English proficiency, educational background, family income) and student performance, identify regional goals for solving the problem of racial and economic isolation.
3. Based on what research shows about the impact of school integration on race relations and adult lifestyle choices, identify regional goals for improving race relations in the Richmond Metropolitan Area.
4. Based on what research shows about the effectiveness of magnet schools and special regional programs, what types of interdistrict or regional schools should be proposed and funded as appropriate ways to increase diversity and improve quality of education?
5. Based on what research shows about the history of mandatory busing as a means of integrating schools, develop a policy statement on busing in the Richmond Metropolitan Area.
6. Based on what research shows about the relationship of white flight and private schools to school integration, develop a policy statement on maintaining racial balance to achieve school integration.
7. Based on what research shows about school choice and voucher systems, develop a policy statement on expanding parental and student choice of schools.
8. How is public education presently funded and what changes should be recommended to equalize educational opportunities for all students?
9. Based on what research shows about teacher preparation for a diverse student body, develop recommendations for training current teachers and changing preparation for new teachers.
10. Based on the patterns of racial distribution and standardized test results in the Richmond Metropolitan Area, develop recommendations for committees evaluating the Standards of Learning examinations.